



THE INDEPENDENT

3,060

FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 1996

WEATHER Cloud, rain and a little sunshine

40P (24 45P)

Passengers trapped as packed train crashes at peak of rush hour

Commuter horror on the 5.04

PETER VICTOR and LOUISE JURY

One person was killed and another feared dead with up to 100 others injured last night after two trains collided at Watford Junction in Hertfordshire.

Up to 40 people were trapped in the wreckage of the 5.04pm passenger train from London Euston to Milton Keynes after part of the commuter train was derailed and tipped onto its side.

Around 400 passengers were thought to be on the crowded rush hour service from Euston when it collided with an empty stock train coming from Bletchley to Euston. Overhead power lines were brought down in the crash.

The engine and the front carriage of the commuter train, a four-coach electrical unit, ended up on top of the stock train. Carriages splayed both ways from the point of the head-on impact. One hung precariously over a 50ft embankment. A second carriage tumbled down a 30 to 40 foot embankment where passengers were trapped for several hours after the crash.

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Ambulance Service said it believed that there were two fatalities.

"Eye" witness Margaret Keenan, 14, who was walking across Radlett Park in Watford, said: "I could see one train coming up the line towards Watford. Suddenly there was the most enormous bang and crash. There was a scraping sound and one carriage just turned on its side at the top of the embankment.

"I could see some people getting off other carriages of the train. There was one old lady who was being helped off by people. The fire engines and ambulances were here quickly. They started taking loads of

people out of the trains and a lot were walking. It was awful when I heard the bang. My little sister started screaming. People ran over to see what had happened."

Mary Heffernan, 52, was in Radlett Park, Watford with her daughter when the trains crashed. She said: "Both trains were moving quite fast towards each other. Then there was the most almighty crash and there were sparks and smoke and wires everywhere. I have never seen anything like it in my life."

The Watford crash is the second major rail disaster this year. In March, a postal worker was killed and 22 injured when a derailed freight train at Rickerscote, south of Stafford, was hit head-on by a Glasgow-bound mail train.

Yesterday's crash was only a few miles from the scene of Britain's second-worst incident at Harrow and Wealdstone, north London, in 1952 when 112 people were killed and 340 hurt.

But the worst of recent years was the Clapham rail disaster in 1988. Thirty-five people died when the Pymelbourne Express crashed into a stationary train because of a faulty signal. A third train then crashed into the wreckage.

The British Railways Board virtually admitted liability and paid out millions of pounds in compensation to the families of the victims and more than 400 people who made personal injury claims.

A major inquiry into how the accident happened recommended a £700 million train safety scheme throughout the rail network to prevent a re-occurrence. The in-car system, known as Automatic Train Protection, ensures that trains cannot pass a signal at red and keeps speeds within the permitted limit. But there was a storm of protest last year when then Transport Secretary, Brian Mawhinney finally ruled against its implementation on grounds of cost.

"Serious rail accidents are relatively rare and there has been a significant improvement

One Yorkshire couple, who only gave their names as Ann

and Roy, waited out the storm in a tree, clutching their two young children, as water rose more than 1m high.

"It was horrendous. All I could think about was trying to keep warm," said Ann.

An unknown number of holidaymakers at the site, which was said to have operating at capacity, were still missing yesterday.

As the death toll rose to 62, survivors described how they had clung to trees and given up helping other victims in their efforts to save themselves, after a freak flash flood sent mud, rocks and uprooted trees crashing through the site, shortly after 7.15pm on Wednesday.

More than 180 people were injured, including 13 Britons.

The flash flood, caused by heavy rains during the previous two days, swept campers, tents, caravans and cars from the Virgen de las Nieves camp up to half-a-mile away.

Witnesses said some people had saved themselves by clinging to trees. One man who survived by grabbing hold of a

branch said he had watched bodies being swept past in the strong flow.

Another survivor, visibly shocked, described from his hospital bed how he had to give up helping other people swept away by the flood in order to save his own life. "There comes a moment when it's you or nobody," he said.

According to the Aragonese regional government, those 28 dead whose identities were yesterday made public were all Spanish.

Officials fear dozens more bodies could still lie downstream, in a river near the mountain town of Biescas, about 80 miles east of Pamplona. Some of the bodies were pulled from mud as far as 10 miles downstream from the camping area.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia flew to the disaster area

nine, who were travelling with a caravan.

The family had lost their caravan and car in the torrent but were said to be "remarkably well" given their ordeal and were staying with a Spanish family. A second family of four was also involved, according to unconfirmed reports.

Police said the task of identifying the victims was being complicated by the fact that most were not carrying documents.



After the deluge: Campers searching for their possessions among cars and caravans wrecked by flash floods on Wednesday

Photograph: Sygma

Flash flood turned campsite into 'Dante's version of hell'

JOJO MOYES

A picturesque campsite in the Pyrenees which had hours previously held 650 holidaymakers, was yesterday described by one rescuer as "like a scene from Dante's version of Hell".

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Ossie Clark murder

A 28-year-old unemployed man will appear in court today charged with the murder of Raymond "Ossie" Clark, 54, one of the most influential fashion designers of the 1960s. Diego Cogolito was charged after the discovery of Clark's body at his council flat in Notting Hill, west London, on Wednesday. He had been stabbed several times. Page 3

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Labour tries to damp down Clare Short's attack as new leadership rifts are exposed

Blair warned to slow changes

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Tony Blair is being warned by senior colleagues to slow down his drive to modernise Labour's policy, or face growing unrest within the rank and file in the wake of Clare Short's outpouring of anger at the leadership.

The Labour leadership yesterday sought to limit the damage by dismissing it as a "summer hiccup". But the attack is certain to cost Ms Short a post in a Blair Cabinet.

Mr Blair's office said Ms Short would not be disciplined for calling New Labour a "lie". In a statement, Ms Short said: "There are no policy differences between us and I strongly support Tony Blair's leadership. He will campaign hard for our election victory. The story has been grossly exaggerated."

The leadership insisted there were no policy differences between Ms Short and Mr Blair. But senior figures are alarmed at the threat to cut child benefit from 16-18 year-olds. Mr Blair's intervention in the Tube

The argument is on substance, not style

DONALD MACINTYRE
Chief Political Commentator

forbearance by resisting the temptation to punish her further.

For we should not fall for the old trick of thinking this is really about the spin doctors, or the backbenchers' "advisers" around Mr Blair. It's nice to shoot the messenger, but this is about the message. No modern political party in the Anglo-Saxon world, as Ms Short must know, can win

of the change on Scottish devolution and then about some heavy briefing against party dissidents. In their heads the majority of MPs applaud Blair's achievement in making Labour represent the majority, instead of only the dispossessed minority against the majority. But in their hearts, even some loyalists fret that the urban poor might get forgotten in the rush to win over middle England.

Her reaction to her demotion is totally human. But she had it coming. It's almost impossible not to be a little sentimental about Ms Short. She has blood in her veins. She can't easily be demonised. The engaging and unusually direct connection between her mouth and brain distinguishes her from many other, grayer politicians.

But it isn't really defensible in a democracy, in the television age, for a transport spokesman preparing for power, to walk out of a studio because she is asked a question in an interview about the strike on the London Underground. Mr Blair had no alternative but to move her. For a leader who Ms Short worried about is becoming too much of an "macho man", the Labour leader has shown remarkable

Ulster braced for weekend of disorder

The population of Northern Ireland in general and Londonderry in particular is bracing itself for a weekend of marches and rallies that will bring a high risk of street disorder. Although the army and police have used concrete bollards and razor-wire to seal off the city walls overlooking the Catholic Bogside, nationalists will proceed with plans for demonstrations tonight and on Saturday afternoon.

Meanwhile, 10,000 or more Protestant Apprentice Boys are due in the city tomorrow for their annual parade to commemorate the 17th-century siege of the city. They will arrive against a background of Unionist anger at the Government's decision not to allow several hundred of their number to march along the city walls.

The western section of the walls was sealed off on Wednesday after a series of meetings involving the Apprentice Boys, Bogside residents and others failed to agree on acceptable arrangements for the parade.

Senior RUC sources yesterday accepted that the situation was highly uncertain, but indicated that there were no intelligence indications that loyalists were planning a re-run of last month's Drumcree stand-off. Police thought, however, that republicans from the Bogside might have been planning to occupy the western wall to stop the loyalist march.

The police sources indicated they believed the Apprentice Boys had been well-led and presented a strong case during the dispute. They claimed that residents' associations, by contrast, were being highly influenced by Sinn Fein and the IRA, which they said was "milking the situation".

Leaders of the Apprentice Boys, together with senior Unionist politicians, yesterday

Marches take place against background of Unionist unrest, writes David McKittrick

met the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, to protest against closure of the walls. The organisation's governor, Alastair Simpson, said they had "relayed the anger, sense of betrayal and injustice felt by the Apprentice Boys by the wider loyalist and Unionist community." He said that Sir Patrick had "acknowledged it was an unjust decision, but attempted to justify it on pragmatic grounds".

DUP MP Peter Robinson added: "The whole of the Unionist community is outraged at the decision, which is a capitulation to Sinn Fein threats instead of defending those who are in the right." Yesterday brought appeals for calm from a number of sources, particularly churchmen. Dr James Methaffey, Church of Ireland Bishop of Londonderry, said the Protestant community felt angry and frustrated. He said: "My view is that it's not as serious as some people would make out, but it is still very serious."

A leading Presbyterian minister said that he believed the Friday night march could help ease tensions. The Rev Robert Dawey, the church's moderator in Londonderry and Strabane, said: "Perhaps it is better that people should be able to express their views in a sensible way, rather than feeling they have no other way to go."

The organisers of the parade said it would be peaceful and we have got to take them on their word on this matter."

Siege mentality that will not die

DAVID McKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

Folk historians still relate, with some relish, the horrible conditions experienced by Protestants during the 1688-1689 siege of Londonderry city, the event which loyalists will celebrate this weekend.

Surrounded for months by a Jacobite army, thousands died of fever, dysentery and famine in the beleaguered city. As food supplies dwindled a cat came to be worth four shillings and sixpence: a mouse cost sixpence and a dog's head sold for half-a-crown.

But the Protestant folk-memory is that their ancestors endured the worst that the Catholic besiegers could inflict, and emerged triumphant.

This weekend's march is not only a celebration of that victory, but also a declaration of the deep-seated Unionist belief that, 300 years on, they remain under political siege.

The Apprentice Boys, who organise the march, take their name from the 13 apprentices who closed the city gates against the forces of James II, thus precipitating the siege. The group is smaller than the Orange

Order and technically independent from it, but in practice the memberships of the two overlap. Their primary purpose – organising Protestant parades – are identical.

The August marches which commemorate the lifting of the siege are largely controlled by Apprentice Boys clubs. The most important of these are in the city itself, but branches exist all over Northern Ireland and, in a small way, in the Irish Republic, England, Scotland and Canada. The vast majority of the 12,000 members, led by a local newsagent and a community worker, are working-class Protestants who see themselves as making an important political statement.

Between the 1920s and 1970s Londonderry took on another political significance. Nationalists in the city complained that district boundaries were manipulated to ensure that the council remained in Unionist hands. The violence that ensued left scars on the city, but the 1990s saw a remarkable renaissance. But last month's return of large-scale riots have tarnished its new image, which will suffer even more if the weekend brings fresh violence.

Child whose smile belies the horrific violence she endured



First smile: Josephine Russell, 9, who survived a brutal attack on 9 July, smiles from her London hospital room in the first picture since the incident. Her mother, Lin, and sister, Megan, six, died in the attack. Photograph: Kent Police

The Staggers gets a grip and cocks a snook at rival

Michael Streeter finds the New Statesman revived

The row over Clare Short's attack on the "dark forces" of Labour has overshadowed a quiet but significant revolution at one of Britain's best-loved institutions - the New Statesman. For the "Staggers", as the magazine is affectionately known, that controversial Short interview is a sign that, once again, it is a political force to be reckoned with.

Other high-profile stories in the magazine recently have included the attack by Joy Johnson, Labour's former campaign and media chief, on Tony Blair's "elaborate and obscure" rhetoric; and the interview with Peter Thomson, 60, the Australian vicar who inspired the Blairite view of politics at Oxford University.

Already the effects have been noticeable. The New Statesman now has a circulation of 22,000, a 4,000 increase in just a couple of months and a figure that may soon begin to worry its

right-wing rival, *The Spectator*, which has also built sales on high-profile scoops.

The two men behind the revival of the magazine – once essential reading for the political élite, latterly seen as rather dreary and sectarian-ridden rag – are new editor Ian Hargreaves (ex-editor of *The Independent* and now owner, Geoffrey Robinson, the multi-millionaire Labour MP.

Ironically, in view of the short row, this is the same Mr Robinson whose Tuscany villa is at present providing a summer holiday venue for Mr and Mrs Blair. Yesterday, it seemed Mr Hargreaves was also away, but his deputy, Jane Taylor, was pleased with the latest scoop. "We're delighted to be at the centre of attention and

creating waves and getting people reading and thinking about the issues involved."

Scops, in fact, are not necessarily the first concern of the "Staggers": that more good analysis and good writing. And the Short interview, one of a number with senior political figures, had, in effect, fallen into their laps. The interview was originally going to take place on the day after the Shadow Cabinet election results and understandably she re-arranged it, said Ms Taylor. "Once she had done it, we realised that the interview would make news."

However, many see the run of headline-grabbing stories, coupled with a re-design two months ago, as a clear and aggressive sign of wanting to make the *New Statesman* a magazine

able to compete with success of *The Spectator* – which has broken a number of big stories, including the anti-German remarks by Nicholas Ridley which led to his resignation from the Cabinet, Lord Denning's belief in the hanging of Irish terrorists, the exposure of journalist Richard Gott's apparent KGB links and the royalist tattle-tale revealed by A N Wilson after a private dinner party with the Queen Mother.

Such revelations have been fewer under the new editor, Frank Johnson, but he is pleased about the resurgence of his rival. "I think it is a good thing that it is doing well. I welcome it, there is room for us all. I think people will always buy good magazines and good newspapers." Mr Johnson has reason to be magnanimous. *The Spectator* is about to announce circulation figures of more than 55,000 – the best ever. The "Staggers" still has some way to go.

Fears over safer blood bag costs

LOUISE JURY

A new bar-code system to prevent potentially fatal errors in identifying blood bags, launched this week, could cost hospitals millions of pounds to implement.

The system will be controlled by a new national computer network which the National Blood Service plans to introduce. But many hospitals will need new equipment costing up to £20m to read the new labels.

The blood centre which cov-

ers London and the South-east last weekend became the first to use the new computer, called Pulse, and the bar codes. But the question of how hospitals will fund the switch is unresolved, prompting fears that delay in a nationwide launch will hinder efforts to improve safety.

Philip Hunt, director of the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts, said: "Any improvement in the blood service has got to be welcomed. But it indicates yet another

cost pressure on NHS hospitals."

The new 14-digit system is needed because the current six-digit codes meant that most regional centres will be soon forced to use the same numbers within a 12-month period, increasing the risk of errors in handling. Giving patients the wrong blood in transfusion can prove fatal and a 1994 report in the *British Medical Journal* pointed to 111 incidents between 1990 and 1991, with six deaths.

The new standard was de-

veloped over five years by the International Society for Blood Transfusion (ISBT). But Peter Gibson, who has developed its use for the South Thames blood centre, said the decision to switch could not be made by the National Blood Service unilaterally: "It does mean that hospitals need to change their equipment scanners ... As the NHS is funded by the public, it has to be approved by the Department of Health. That decision is some way ahead."

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

The Royal Mail claimed more staff refused to strike this week than was previously thought and yesterday renewed calls for a ballot on its proposed pay deal. A Post Office spokesman said nearly 18,000 staff did not join Tuesday's industrial dispute compared with an earlier estimate of 14,900.

The Royal Mail believed that the Communication Workers' Union should ask its 138,000 members in the post service whether they accept an offer which was negotiated at the conciliation service, Acas, but later rejected by the CWU executive. "It is militants on the union's executive who, far from being democratic as they claim, are opposed to letting their members judge for themselves the deal on offer," the spokesman said. Management is sending all workers a copy of the proposed deal.

But Alan Johnson, the CWU's joint general secretary, said: "It's a great shame that Royal Mail are putting so much effort into producing meaningless statistics instead of sitting down with the union and trying to reach a negotiated settlement." Louise Jury

Claims that evidence of life on Mars has been found by Nasa scientists were doubted yesterday by Belgian Nobel Prize-winning biologist Christian de Duve, an expert on life in the Universe, who said he has "serious reservations" about them. "The evidence as presented by the scientists at a news conference is far from conclusive," he said. "The chemical evidence mentioned ... has been found before on other meteorites and never been used to claim that it is evidence of life. Just because organic substances were found on a meteorite that is supposed to have come from Mars does not mean they were formed on Mars by living organisms," he said.

"It is interesting. It is important. It is intriguing. But it is far from conclusive," Mr de Duve said. "The scientists were very cautious in saying that there could be other interpretations. But they did participate in the show which was obviously stage-managed by Nasa ... Would this have happened if this was not an election year in the US?" Charles Arthur

Eurofighter 2000 will cost Britain an extra £1.25bn and will come into service three years late, a public-spending watchdog warns today. The National Audit Office said Britain's £15.4bn share of the four-nation project had risen by 43.7 per cent largely because of new weapons to be fitted to the fighter. But the NAO report on major weapons projects also reveals that the Ministry of Defence may get a £3.5bn windfall from savings on Trident, Britain's nuclear missile system. The report will fuel speculation that the Government has secretly cut back on the killing power of Trident, which was designed to destroy targets in Russia and the Ukraine during the Cold War. Colin Brown

Unions accused London Underground yesterday of risking passenger safety with a plan to use managers to drive trains on the Central and Waterloo & City lines to the City of London if next Tuesday's industrial action goes ahead. A memo seen by the rail unions outlines duties and states: "At this time there seems no negotiated end to the strike so we are now charged with the job of doing the best we can with the resources available." The proposals were immediately criticised by the RMT rail union and the train drivers' union Aslef as escalating the dispute.

Le Adams (right), Aslef's general secretary, said that efforts to resolve the dispute would be more profitable "than engaging in stunts which put lives at risk". An LU spokesman denied any danger and said only fully qualified managers would take part. Louise Jury

Courts should stop sending so many women to prison for minor offences, penal reformers said yesterday. There were 2,313 women in prison in England and Wales at the end of July – a 68 per cent increase in the last four years – a report by the Prison Reform Trust says. But only 19.5 per cent were in custody for offences or allegations of violence. The director of the PRT, Stephen Shaw, said: "Every week around five or six women come into Holloway, Britain's largest women's prison in north London, for non-payment of their TV licence. One in twenty is a fine defaulter. The number of women prisoners who pose a grave danger to the public can probably be counted on the fingers of one hand."

Tower Hamlets Council is hoping for £2m compensation following the IRA bombing last February in Docklands, east London. Few of the families living near the South Quay blast last February had insurance policies; some families have been offered loans from the Government's social fund but many have been unable to take them up because they cannot afford repayments. The council has applied to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, for a grant under the Criminal Damage (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order set up in 1977 to help those who had property damaged in Northern Ireland as a result of terrorist acts. There appears to be nothing in the order preventing compensation for similar acts in mainland Britain. Charlie Ball

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FABRICATION

In the Sixties he was the living image of fashion. Last night a man was charged with killing him. Steve Boggan wonders ...

Whatever happened to Ossie Clark?

When the film-maker Derek Jarman first met Raymond "Ossie" Clark at the Slade School of Art in London in 1963, he was moved to write: "Decadence, I learnt, was the first sign of intelligence."

Within a few short years of that meeting, Clark's own brand of decadence had helped mould an entire generation.

His clothes were worn by Mick Jagger, Twiggy, Marc Bolan and Jimi Hendrix, his name was synonymous with the Swinging Sixties and his portrait – with his wife, Celia Birtwell, and his cat, Percy – painted by David Hockney, was hanging in the Tate Gallery.

One can only wonder, then, what the late Jarman would have made of the fashion designer's spectacular descent into hardship and obscurity three decades later, of his erratic life in a west London council flat and of his pleas for mercy after being convicted of assaulting a police officer.

Yesterday, as the world of fashion and its followers mourned his passing, remembering the golden years at Clark's boutique, Quorum, on the King's Road in Chelsea, the questions seemed difficult to answer.

In the intervening years, Clark, 54, had become bankrupt, had split from Ms Birtwell, his emotional and business partner until 1974, and had begun a gay relationship.

Kenneth Soeddon, 35, a neighbour in Penzance Street, Notting Hill, said Clark would become deflated when his career was discussed.

"I never spoke to him about his famous past," he said. "Whenevver it was mentioned, he would become all reflective."

"His flat was organised chaos and artistically neglected. He liked smoking brightly coloured cocktail cigarettes. He would smoke them when he could afford them, and when he couldn't afford them he would just smoke any old cigarette."

Other neighbours described Clark as dressing like an ageing hippie and said their children would tease him about being gay, provoking him into chasing them in a good-humoured manner. Like most of Clark's clients, Mick Jagger yesterday found his death hard to take. He recalled a "flowery zip-up-jump suit" de-



Faded star: Clark at the height of his fame in the Sixties (above) and at a friend's funeral in 1990



signed by Clark for the Rolling Stones' 1972 *Exile on Main Street* tour. "Ossie was a great friend, a wonderfully talented clothes designer," he said.

Ms Birtwell, mother of Clark's sons, Albert, 26, and George, 24, spoke of his "unique talent" and the good years they spent together.

"The years 1966 to 1974 were great years," she said. "He had the marvellous ability to produce these marvellous chiffon silks and snakeskin clothes, which everybody of my generation loved."

"He was a real star, but unfortunately it didn't last. I think he got broken by it."

In February of this year Clark reached rock bottom, appear-

ing at Southwark Crown Court on charges of assaulting a policeman after crashing into an unmarked police car while apparently drunk.

He was convicted, but escaped prison "by the skin of my teeth", as he put it, after desperate pleas in mitigation by his counsel, Oscar del Fabro. "He was a famous designer in the Sixties," recalled Mr del Fabro. "He was the progenitor and founder of an industry that is worth many millions of pounds. His contemporaries have gone on to greater things, but he has fallen on hard times. You can see the tragedy of a reputation and empire which has fallen by the way."

So, what did happen to Ossie Clark? The answer may be found in a "correspondents' questions" page of the *Daily Mail* in April 1994 when, above a question on the origins of the expression "choc-a-block", a reader asked, "Whatever happened to Ossie Clark?"

Replies personally, Clark wrote: "After the excitement of the Sixties and Seventies, travelling the world, having my picture in the Tate Gallery, etc., things calmed down. By 1983 I was in financial difficulties and had divorced."

"Around this period I lost my love of the fashion world and restricted myself to designing three or four ball gowns or wedding dresses a year for friends. I also took up new interests – writing, drawing, music, walking and spending time with friends. My previous somewhat unreal lifestyle came to an end as I sought more genuine values."

"I had the same ups and downs most people have, but I enjoyed the next 10 years and felt privileged at being my own master. I feel this is the most important thing for a creative mind, even if it causes financial hardship."

"I've decided I'm ready to return to designing. I've had discussions about setting up my own studio, and I'm waiting for offers from potential patrons. Until then, I am enjoying producing exclusive one-offs for special customers."

And, according to neighbours, Bianca Jagger had recently called round at the flat for a fitting.

Obituary, page 14



Art of fame: David Hockney's painting of Ossie Clark, his ex-wife, Celia, and their cat, Percy. The work is on display in London's Tate Gallery

Designer who made London swing

TAMSIN BLANCHARD

When Ossie Clark graduated from the RCA in the mid-1960s, his work had an instant impact. His first collection, designed for the King's Road boutique, Quorum, sold to New York store, Neiman Marcus, much as John Galliano's graduation collection sold to Browns of South Molton Street.

Mr Clark was the only student in his year to graduate with a first-class degree, and from the late 1960s to early 1970s, he was the driving force behind the

fashion explosion of that period. His label became as sought after as Mary Quant. Mick Jagger's smock and trousers worn on stage at the famous Hyde Park concert in 1969 were by Ossie Clark.

Mr Clark's partnership with his wife, the textile designer Celia Birtwell, produced some of the most lasting images of the London fashion scene. His clothes were daring and controversial, always pushing forward the boundaries of fashion. A seemingly demure crepe dress would have semi-sheer chiffon panels

over the breasts. His zip-up biker jacket was one of the first to be made of snakeskin. And details such as stitching on shoulders were as much of a signature as Westwood's orb is today.

Mr Clark was a versatile designer, remembered as much for his romantic, bias-cut, floaty tunics and trousers as for his modern tailoring and ingenious use of Ms Birtwell's prints, mixed and mismatched with the eye of an artist.

To fashionable women of the period, Mr Clark's clothes still mean a lot. Affordable by to-

day's designer standards, they were worn and loved by thousands of women from London to his place of birth, Liverpool, where he opened a boutique called Creem in the early 1970s.

Zandra Rhodes said yesterday: "Ossie Clark represents swinging London at its zenith. The things he did together with Celia Birtwell – were the flowering of British fashion. One collection with prints inspired by the Ballets Russes would have made him as big as Galliano is today if he had shown in Paris. Only the history books will give him the credit he is due."

Students warned re-takes could cost them £300

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Students planning to re-take their A-levels to obtain better grades may face higher university fees in future, the head of the admissions service warned last night.

Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), said students unsure whether to take a year off or repeat exams should think twice. Places would be available for most people if they were prepared to be flexible.

He warned that the £300 levy on all new students threatened by vice chancellors in response to budget cuts could prompt legal action for breach of contract from students. Although top-up fees look unlikely to happen in most universities, a number of elite institutions may start charging fees next year.

Among those which have already discussed plans are Birmingham University and the London School of Economics. Mr Higgins said that stu-



dents who applied early and accepted an offer during the autumn might be protected from top-up fees by the law.

Universities might find themselves in trouble if they imposed a charge after making agreements with candidates, he said.

"If an applicant has accepted an offer, even conditionally, then a contract exists. It may be a highly difficult legal question," he said.

After A-Level results are

published next Thursday, the clearing process, through which surplus places are allocated, will begin.

This year, 420,000 students are competing for 290,000 places, about 40,000 of which are likely to be filled through clearing. The numbers are almost identical to last year, Mr Higgins said yesterday.

At a conference to launch clearing, which begins on 19 August, he also highlighted new statistics which showed that more and more students were choosing to study closer to home. The proportion going to university in their home region rose from 42 per cent in 1994 to 46 per cent in 1995.

The change was partly due to financial pressures and partly because a greater proportion were mature students, who were likely to be married with children, Mr Higgins said.

Students from poorer backgrounds were more likely to study at new universities near their homes and to live with their parents, while those from the middle classes still went away to university.

Women were more likely to stay at home than men, the report showed, with eight out of 10 aged between 25 and 39 doing so. Students from ethnic minorities were also more likely to stay nearer to home. Three-quarters of all black entrants from the London area went to university in the same region last year.

More than half of all maths students decided to stay near home, while almost two-thirds of those taking medicine or dentistry moved away.

Mr Higgins said it was sad that social or financial circumstances were preventing some students from the benefits of living and working away from home.

"Perhaps it is equally character-building, spending three years living with your parents at the age of 19 as going away, though I suppose it depends on your relationship with your parents," he said.

The official UCAS listings of places available through clearing will be published exclusively in the *Independent*, starting on Monday, 19 August.

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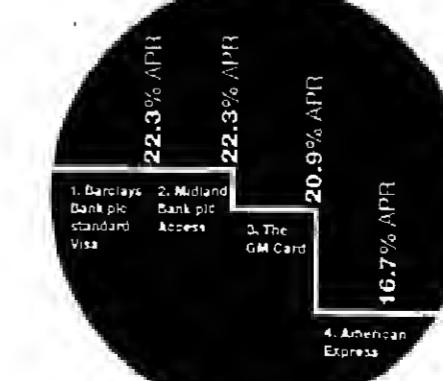
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Rothschild took his life after death of mother

HELEN NOWICKA

Amesel Rothschild, millionaire heir to the banking dynasty, hanged himself in a Paris hotel room while suffering from depression brought on by his mother's death.

An inquest heard yesterday how the banker was a reticent man who did not show his feelings but had been distressed since his mother, Teresa, Lady Rothschild, had died six weeks earlier.

In a written statement read to the court his widow, Anita, said: "His family had noticed that he had depressive tendencies. We do not know the reason for this but certain family antecedents predisposed him to this act. The loss of his mother had affected him."

Mrs Rothschild, part of the Guinness family, added her husband of 15 years had not been receiving treatment or taking medication for depression. The family was represented by lawyers in court.

Mr Rothschild, 41, whose personal fortune has been estimated at between £50m and £100m, was the chairman of Rothschild Asset Management, the fund management arm of the family banking firm. He was in Paris last month with Peter Troughton, the company's deputy chairman, for a business meeting after which he returned to his room at the Hotel Bristol.

The pair had arranged to meet for a drink before dinner

but the usually punctual Mr Rothschild did not appear at the arranged time. After 20 minutes, Mr Troughton tried to call him but the line was busy. He was on the point of going to Mr Rothschild's room when the hotel manager informed him Mr Rothschild had died.

Mr Troughton told the hearing at Westminster Coroner's Court in London that the meeting had been successful and Mr Rothschild had not seemed troubled afterwards, but added that he was a "reticent" man.

Naima Debbouza, a hotel chambermaid, said Mr Rothschild had seemed angry when she had gone to his room that evening to deliver his laundry.

In a written statement she said: "He took the box containing the washing out of my hands very aggressively and banged his door like someone annoyed, even disturbed."

Less than two hours later she returned to room 402 to make his bed. When she knocked and received no answer she let herself in to find his fully-clothed body in the bathroom, his dressing gown still fastened around his neck and tied to the towel rail.

Pathologist Dr Iain West said a post-mortem examination had revealed marks around Mr Rothschild's neck consistent with hanging.

Recording a verdict of suicide, the coroner Dr Paul Knapman emphasised there were no sinister circumstances surrounding Mr Rothschild's death.

Photograph: Tom Pilston

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Fields of gold: Global warming brings sunshine harvest



Pick of the crop: Dwarf sunflowers, growing at Croxton Park Farm, Cambridgeshire, will be sold for birdseed

Photograph: Keith Dobney

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Sunflowers are creeping into the English countryside. Sights like this, near the village of Eltisley in Cambridgeshire, are expected to become more common if global warming is here to stay.

At present the huge flowers are still a rare crop, with a handful of English farmers growing less than 6,000 acres in all. They thrive only south of a line between Bristol and the Wash.

Dan Bull, manager of Croxton Park Farm, grows his to provide birdseed. The bulk of Britain's modest output of seeds are crushed to make oil for cooking or for blending into margarine and other spreads.

Mr Bull has planted 30 acres of sunflowers as a "break crop", to give the soil a rest from wheat and barley. He finds they need little fertiliser and herbicides, can be harvested with a conventional combine, and bring in £200 an acre - less than other crops, but not a trivial sum.

There is only one hitch. Drivers on the nearby road stop, tramp through his barley and take photographs. "They're a pretty crop, which seems to please Joe Bloggs," he said.

The case
of the CRIMINAL
broad bean.

Meet a potential Euro law breaker. The Crimson Flowered broad bean. The bean that once graced the dining table of Elizabeth I is now, according to Brussels, unregistered and so illegal to sell for growing. And be warned, this is not the only vegetable they've got their teeth into. As well intended as this directive *seems* is, it means that the Silsden Bomb cabbage, the Boothby Blonde cucumber and the incomparable Laird's Victory turnip could also be for the chop.

And it is this loss of individuality that has the brewmasters of Bremen concerned. We have always sourced our water from the same glacial, underground spring. Our yeast is different too. Call us pedantic, but we have always grown our own. And to brew the bier of biers, we demand the hop of hops. That's why, since 1874, we've only ever used the special hops of the Hallertau and Tettnang regions.

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Fear not for your bier. Our persistent individuality and our unique taste will remain constant forever. You may now only find this poor illegal bean in a museum of horticulture, but let us reassure you, the only display cabinet you'll ever see a bottle of Beck's in is a refrigerated one.



BREWED IN BREMEN GERMANY SINCE 1874

news

Dear John, The weather's fine and the Chianti is good. Why are people worrying about where I go on holiday?

Some wine, a copy of the *New Statesman*, and Chiantishire is paradise, writes **Rebecca Fowler**

As Tony Blair rose for breakfast in the Chiantishire sunshine yesterday morning and stepped into something summery, having left his cardigan at home in Islington, at least for a moment it must have seemed the perfect setting for a political holiday.

Here they were with the kids in the villa of Geoffrey Robinson, the millionaire owner of the socialist *New Statesman*, and a bunch of devoted New Labour followers. There was undoubtedly some lively banter over Clare Short's attack on his leadership and the "dark forces" surrounding him, but not too much. This was a holiday.

So what if there was a hint of the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie to the place. Since the Mr Blair family holiday in the Butlin's resort at Bognor Regis last year, he has left behind any pretensions of courting the working classes through his choice of resort.

But the Blairs' critics thought otherwise. Rather than holidaying with the masses, the family has been accused of living it up, drinking fine wines, and bathing in a private swimming pool as removed as a royal holiday from socialism.

When the Italian press arrived on the doorstep, Mr Blair dismissed attacks on his "middle-class" choice of holiday destination, although he resisted suggesting of his detractors: "Let them eat pasta". Instead Mr Blair reportedly said: "If we don't free ourselves of all this ideological weight, we won't be able to change the country".

He also ventured to his invited guests: "You're not British journalists by any chance, are you? I say! I love it. There's so much history, culture, the weather's great and I like the wine."

According to Sir Bernard Ingham, there is no perfect holiday destination for political leaders, and they should not be



restricted in their choice – with the obvious exceptions of dictators. But he was still concerned by Chiantishire.

Sir Bernard, who is going on holiday to the Baltics this year, said: "They should go anywhere they like, but I think Chiantishire is a particularly pretentious choice. It's where all the twits go, and I wouldn't be seen dead there. I would have reservations about going to Europe at all, the thought

of those beaches revolts me."

There was no shortage of British comrades for the Blairs. Peter Mandelson, Mr Blair's adviser, has also headed for the joys of spaghetti and ice cream in the Italian hills, as has Chris Smith, Labour's spokesman for health. And, as Mr Blair pointed out, this was once a favourite spot of the Kinnocks.

It is a far cry from the starker sojourns of Old Labour, when Lord Wilson made, pipe

in hand, for the Scilly Isles each year. The Thatchers also opted for the less swanky hotspots, including Cornwall.

The choice of holiday for the new generation of MPs during the 11-week parliamentary recess is a cross-party affair, with a clear division between those who opt for the champagne of France and those more comfortable with Chianti in Tuscany. The Majors are leading the French team this week, at the

white villa of the carpet millionaire, Lord Harris of Peckham, on the Riviera at Mougin, where Picasso retired and where Norna was spotted wearing a bikini earlier this year.

Among the other politicians who have opted for France is Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, who will set off today with his family for their holiday home in Burgundy. Margaret Beckett is on a caravan site with her family. John

Horam opted for a cycling holiday, and Peter Lilley is visiting both France and Italy.

Those who have gone out on a limb include Virginia Bottomley, who will go with her family to the Isle of Wight, where the Bottomleys are famous for "organising" family sports; and Ron Davies, who

plans to travel around Wales where he may bump into Ann Widdecombe on a five-day walking holiday.

It must be a comfort for the Blairs to know John Prescott is holding the fort, although his turn to go on holiday will come.

Mr Prescott, who as a "working-class" lad went on holidays to Scarborough with his father for the rail union conferences, has also spread his wings – last September he went to the Caribbean.

But the parties have not left politics behind in the holiday season. Mr Prescott launched a

summer advertising campaign last week warning against "Tory lies", which will greet holiday makers at airports at home and abroad, but not in Chiantishire.

The Blairs may be relieved to know a Tory plan for a counter campaign was dropped. "People on holiday do not want party politics thrust down their throats," a source reportedly said. As Mr Blair closed his copy of the *New Statesman* he probably could not agree more.

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Good Friday?

Puritanism in the movies: Presidential election pressures prevent distribution of British director's version of film in US

Too sexy for the States: Dominique Swain (left) plays the eponymous heroine in Adrian Lyne's (centre) *Lolita*; James Mason as Humbert opposite Sue Lyon in Stanley Kubrick's 1962 film version of the 1955 novel

Correctness fears keep *Lolita* under wraps

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

A new film of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* by the British director Adrian Lyne may have fallen victim to the pressure for political correctness in Hollywood during election year.

He has been unable to find a United States distributor six months after completing filming with Jeremy Irons playing the lead opposite an unknown 14-year-old schoolgirl from Malibu, Dominique Swain.

Mr Lyne, who directed the sexually explosive movies *9½ Weeks*, *Fatal Attraction* and *Incident Proposal*, this week suggested that the controversial plot – about a college professor's obsession with the young daughter of his landlady – meant it was "doomed from the start".

The novel was filmed in 1962 by Stanley Kubrick – whose version of *A Clockwork Orange* was banned because of its disturbing violence – and starred James Mason as Humbert and Sue Lyon as Lolita.

Mr Lyne told *Entertainment Weekly* that he wanted to film a new version of *Lolita* because the original script, also by

Nabokov, was so terrible. "Nabokov's screenplay is as bad as the novel is magnificent," he said.

His search for the perfect script saw Harold Pinter and David Mamet try their hand at the adaptation before the job

went to Stephen Schiff, who writes for the *New Yorker*.

The director also wanted to make a more faithful adaptation of the 1955 novel; as a result some of the sexual scenes were so provocative that he used a body double instead of his child star.

But the problem is getting it shown. Distributors are fighting shy of the £31m movie following the withdrawal of the Oscar-winning producer Richard D Zanuck from the project: he had lent it respectability in the eyes of the Hollywood corporations

Almost 2,000 teenage hopefuls turned up to audition for the part of Lolita, but Mr Lyne's difficulties are compounded by the critical comments of the original child star, Lyon. Now 49, she says that playing the schoolgirl subject of an older man's paedophile fantasies ruined her life. "My destruction as a person dates from that movie. Lolita exposed me to temptation. No girl of that age should undergo. I defy any pretty girl who is rocketed to stardom at 14 in a sex symphony role to stay

on a level path thereafter."

Ms Lyon went through three broken marriages, took drugs and suffered manic depression. She now works as a secretary.

Her attacks adds fuel to the political-correctness campaigners and the far right in

America, who believe Hollywood films should promote family values, not explore paedophilia and violence.

One of their biggest supporters is the Republican presidential candidate, Bob Dole. It is this pressure to rein in Hollywood which could damage the film's chances of being released – at least until after November's election.

"No one wants to be seen handling a film like that when Dole is leading the crusade to eliminate violence and sex in the movies," says Matt Mueller, editor of *Premiere* magazine.

"Part of the problem is that Lyne is contractually bound to deliver an 'R' rating. In America that means that anybody under 17 can see it if they are accompanied by an adult."

He believes that to get it Lyne may be forced to cut some of the more sexually explicit scenes – one is reputed to show Swain lolling nude on a bed and another shows her and Irons in bed – to get a distribution deal. "Someone will pick up the film, I'm sure, but it could mean waiting until after the election. If Clinton gets in, it would not be so much of a problem," Mr Mueller added.

Author's family sues makers of steamy Tarzan film



Jungle love: Johnny Weissmuller as Tarzan, with Jane. The actor starred in 19 films between 1932-1948

LOUISE JURY

In these days of sophisticated more, when the "Me Tarzan, you Jane" school of social etiquette is verging on the politically incorrect, there are some people who still wish to defend the apeman's unblemished reputation.

In a bid to keep Tarzan's image "wholesome", the descendants of his creator, author Edgar Rice Burroughs, are suing the makers of a pornographic film and CD-Rom for vulgarising the jungle hero's image.

It cannot be denied that in the original 26 novels starring the Tarzan of the Apes character – and in the even more famous films – he strutted around

skimpily dressed and was prone to clutching jungle-mate Jane to his many chest, claiming to protect her.

But he did not indulge in fellatio, sodomy, group sex or even straightforward intercourse, and the family of Edgar Rice Burroughs, who own the company which controls the Tarzan image, maintain he should do.

The family has accused *Jungle Heat*, a porn movie, of being "nothing more than a lewd, vulgar and highly offensive film".

While the character in the movie, also released in a French version edited *Dord'Zan: The Humiliation of Jane*, is called Tarzan only once, he goes by Tarzan's other name, Ape Man,

and shares many Tarzan traits, according to the family's legal team.

For example, Ape Man wears a loin cloth and carries a knife, he lives in the jungle and repeatedly emits the famous and unique Tarzan yell, he swings from vine to vine in the jungle, he rescues Jane from peril and he is accompanied by his animal friend, Cheeta," it said.

Burroughs, who died in 1950, founded the family corporation, Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc, in 1923, to control the image of Tarzan, who first swung from the trees in 1912.

The company is based in Tarzana, California, the community which was named after the character in 1930. Since then, it has licensed daily

comic strips, 46 feature films and more than 150 television shows in 72 countries.

But it did not approve the film, whose video jacket claims to "explore in exhausting detail the steamy passion that blazed between Jane and her Jungle King".

The suit names Ultimate Video of Chatsworth, California, Executair Entertainment of Fullerton, California, Thorn Distributors of Hauppauge, New York, and director Joe D'Amato of Italy.

The Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc corporation wants the makers of *Jungle Heat* to pay unspecified damages, to stop the distribution of the film and to recall and destroy all copies of the movie.

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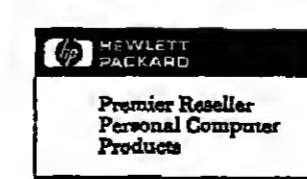
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8 international

Israeli attack: Prospects for cease-fire look bleak

Stalemate as trust dries up in Lebanon

ROBERT FISK
Bradlit, southern Lebanon

Somewhere inside the great earthen Israeli artillery compound above this smashed village lies the first reason why the five-power Lebanese ceasefire monitoring committee – meeting 20 miles east of here on the Mediterranean coast yesterday – will fail in its endeavours.

On Tuesday, two Hezbollah mortar rounds landed on the Bradlit compound. The first wounded two Israeli soldiers who scrambled into a Merkava tank for cover. The second landed on the roof of a bunker, killing instantly an Israeli medical officer about to go to the aid of the wounded men. But afterwards, everybody – the Israelis, the UN peacekeepers and the villagers of Bradlit – admitted they had not the slightest idea from where the mortars had been fired.

Just a day earlier, the Hezbollah's local television station in Beirut had shown pictures of what it called a "new-style" mortar that could not be detected. The broadcast revealed no more about this supposed wonder-weapon, but Bradlit cut it raised some questions. How, for instance, would the US-Israeli-Franco-Syrian-Lebanese monitors discover the provenance of Tuesday's attack? It was, after all, an offensive that, under the April truce agreement between the Hezbollah and the Israelis, might have been within the rules so long as the mortars had not been fired from a civilian area.

Under this same ceasefire, both sides had promised to consult the ceasefire committee before taking retaliation. But Israel did not wait before taking its revenge yesterday. Before dawn, Israeli jets bombarded a Hezbollah radio transmitter and a fuel dump near the eastern Lebanese city of Baalbek, causing no casualties but provoking a storm of rhetoric from the

guerrilla movement. The air-raid was a "violation of all international rules" which, the organisation said, would prompt Hezbollah's own retaliation.

The Israelis trumpeted a strike against "terrorists", failing to mention that the radio station opened its routine transmissions on schedule, three hours later. In Bradlit, villagers noted with relief that Israel's revenge had been cast 70 miles to the north.

In the UN's headquarters at Naqoura on the Lebanese-Israeli border, meanwhile, the Israelis, Syrians, Lebanese, Americans and French of the ceasefire committee managed to sit down together – to agree that they would be meeting again. Such is the dangerous nature

of the south Lebanon truce that not a single reporter was allowed near the UN camp, let alone in the conference room where the generals and colonels had met with cold courtesy just before midday. The US delegate, David Greenlee, shook hands with Jean-Michel Gausset of France, but Syrian Brigadier General Adnan Baloul and Israeli Brigadier General David Tsur pointedly refused such rituals.

The Syrians have no trust in Israel's new government, and they had already refused an offer of an Israeli escort to

Naqoura through Israel's occupation zone in Lebanon. They arrived with intelligence advisers and Lebanese delegates, in a UN helicopter from Beirut. When the one-hour meeting finished, they lunched in the Irish UN canteen.

The Israelis drove back to their own country while Mr Greenlee flew to Israel by private helicopter and then back to an equally sparse office in Cyprus. No practical decisions had been taken about the methods of monitoring the guerrilla war in southern Lebanon.

Nor did the UN – deeply sceptical about the work of the five-power committee – offer any advice. After 18 years in southern Lebanon, the UN have, after all, learned to recognise a dead horse when they see one. And the ceasefire committee is an animal doomed to expire almost as soon as it tries to start work. The Israelis and Americans see the institution as a method of disarming the Hezbollah; the Syrians want it to legitimise the Hezbollah as a resistance organisation.

The French and the Lebanese will have to watch impotently as this battle is fought out in the former UN commander's conference room. Since the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon ended last June, following the Israeli massacre of refugees at the UN post at Qana, 10 Israeli soldiers – including a medical officer who died on Tuesday – have been killed. At least the same number of Hezbollah have died, and already both sides are re-writing the ceasefire terms.

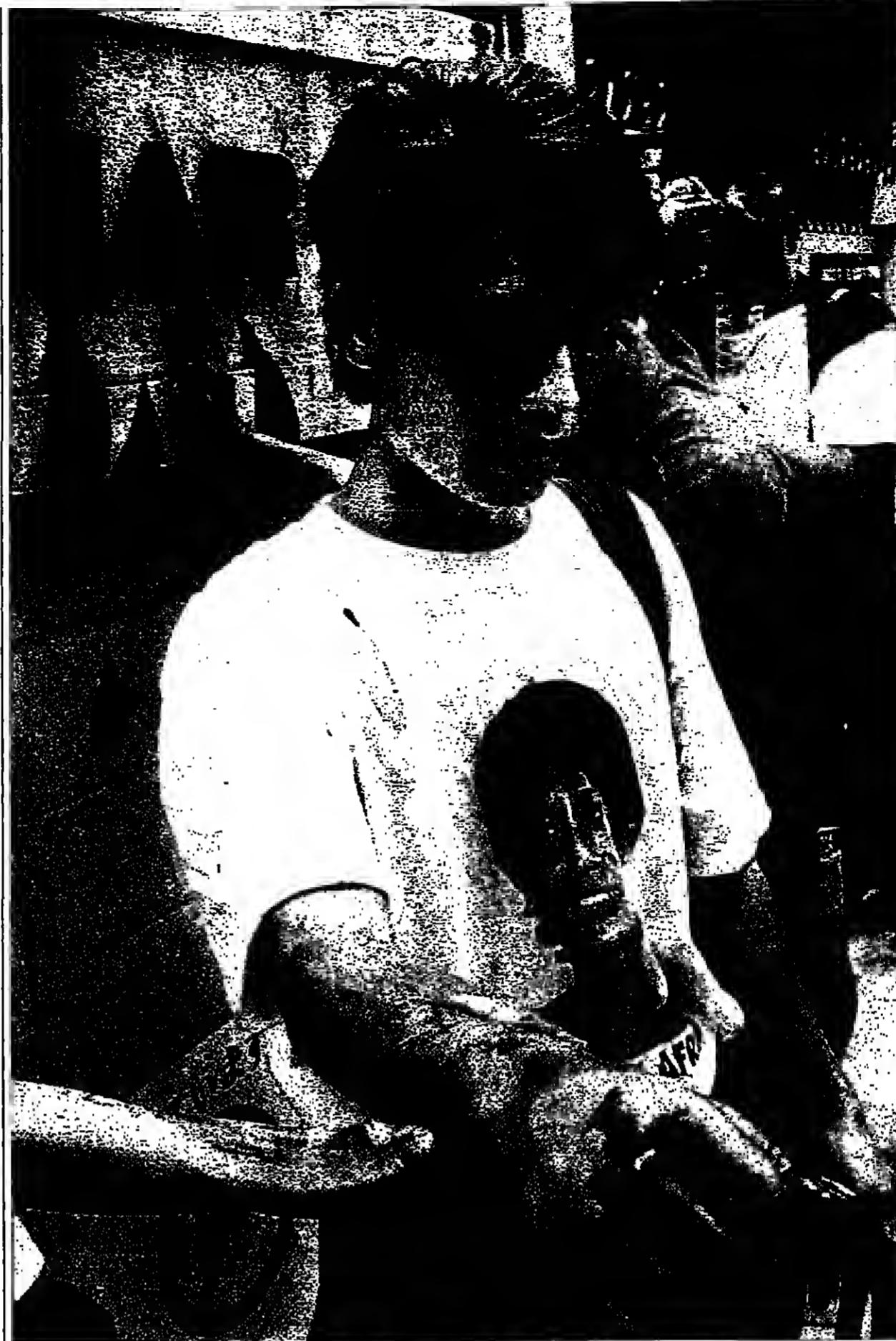
Benjamin Netanyahu, the new Israeli Prime Minister, has promised that Israeli soldiers occupying south Lebanon will not be allowed "to turn into a punching bag for terrorists", while the Hezbollah says it will fight Israeli occupation "until liberation". The UN, it should be added, has wisely asked its headquarters in New York for more armoured vehicles.

Benjamin Netanyahu: will not let soldiers be 'punch bags'

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Body and soul: A Burmese pro-democracy activist on the verge of fainting after smearing his blood on the Burmese embassy in Bangkok yesterday to mark the fatal crackdown in Rangoon eight years ago

DEBORAH CHARLES
Reuter

Bangkok — Exiled Burmese dissidents shed their own blood and staged hunger strikes to mark the eighth anniversary of one of the bloodiest days in a failed pro-democracy uprising in Rangoon.

Several members of a group cut themselves during a protest in front of the Burmese embassy in Bangkok and smeared their blood on the embassy wall.

Standing next to a banner saying "The blood stains of 8-8-88 can never be sponged out", the exiles, wearing red headbands, commemorated the events of 8 August 1988, when hundreds of people were killed by government troops as they demonstrated for democracy.

"The 8-8-88 pro-democracy uprising earned much support from the international community and was recorded in history," one of the protesters said.

"Nevertheless, the military regime has still remained in power and continued to rule the country, oppressing the people."

Dissidents called for stronger international pressure on Burma, which has drawn Western condemnation for a recent crackdown on the National League for Democracy party.

In Rangoon, witnesses said there was no abnormal activity on Mahabandula Street in front of town hall, where most of the people were killed as troops opened fire on demonstrators eight years ago.

But Rangoon residents were unnerved by explosion-like sounds in the capital. Speculation swept the city that bombs had been set off to mark the anniversary of the uprising.

The anniversary came as Amnesty International released another report condemning Burma's military government for human rights abuses and said it was seriously concerned about the practice of forced labour in the country.

Amnesty said Burmese military authorities were responsible for widespread human rights violations in ethnic minority areas including rape, torture and summary executions.

Photograph: AFP

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There's a great deal going on

Germany's mission imperative

IMRE KARACS
Bonn

A "bunch of extremists and fanatics" in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic party were organising a boycott yesterday of the Hollywood blockbuster *Mission Impossible*, and all because of the religious affiliation of its main star, Tom Cruise.

That, at least, was the considered view from the Hamburg headquarters of the Church of Scientology, under whose influence Cruise was said to have fallen. The German government is trying to ban Scientology, and Mr Kohl's youth wing,

the Christian Union, decided to strike the first blow against the "totalitarian organisation".

"The tactic of Scientology is to connect it with the notion of success," said Burkhard Remmers, head of the Christian Union in the state of Lower Saxony. "That is aided by the many US stars who go on publicity tours in Europe. But Scientology does not mean success."

That has certainly not been Cruise's experience, whose latest box-office hit opened in Germany last night. Its low-key launch has been boosted by the young Christians' publicity campaign, virtually guaranteeing good takings through the sum-

mer doldrums. Party members planned to stand in front of cinemas, handing out leaflets denouncing the "dangerous wheeling and dealing of the Scientology organisation".

"There is a fad going on in Germany," said Franz Riedl, a spokesman for the Church. "Politicians who can't make waves in other ways use Scientology to grab headlines."

"That certainly appears to be the case this time, but concern in official German circles about Scientology, which has an estimated 30,000 members in Germany, is deep-seated and genuine. Earlier this year, Bonn's family ministry issued a

pamphlet accusing Scientology,

a Californian-based Church which believes in the fulfilment of the individual as a spiritual being, of trying to undermine democracy in a bid for world domination.

On Wednesday, Johannes Gerster, head of the Christian Democratic Union in Mr Kohl's home state of Rhineland-Palatinate, called for Scientologists to be banned from government jobs. "We firmly believe that Scientology has unconstitutional goals," said Mr Gerster, who unveiled a 10-point list of proposed curbs on Scientology, to be submitted to the party's national conference in the autumn.

Capitalist cockroaches scuttle through China's open window

PEKING DAYS

Cockroaches are brought by the foreigners in ships and in containers. Chinese homes do not have roaches, although some of the restaurants do have," explained Mr Hu Shuqing, cockroach exterminator by appointment. For seven years, Mr Hu has been in charge of roach riddance in the embassies and diplomatic compounds of Peking (which may or may not have been a promotion from his previous job as gardener at the British embassy).

So yesterday morning, Mr Hu was summoned to the *Independent's* modest apartment. He came equipped with the trappings of an emergency service executive – mobile phone and pager. His subordinate swiftly took up a front line position in the kitchen – face mask at the ready, a canister of imported French and Dutch poison strapped to his back, and the spraygun at his hand. It only takes two roaches to start breeding," he said.

Like so many sensitive diplomatic issues, the question of cockroaches provokes yet more cultural friction between China and the rest of the world. Westerners in China spend their time complaining that in no other country have they shared an apartment with so many pests. But over the past three years Chinese people, just like Mr Hu, have repeatedly told me

they can resist cancer. If you inject cancer into a cockroach then all those viruses will destroy the cancer. But the scientists have not found a way to isolate this resistance.

Roaches are territorially ambitious. It is unusual to take a holiday, as many people like me are discovering as they return to Peking after a summer break.

"The cockroaches in the neighbourhood will move in if you are absent. If there are people around they are more frightened." Their only bit of obliging behaviour was that they would die in "visible places", Mr Hu promised.

So how, I wondered, did the roach man view his likely career progression? The outlook was not that promising, lamented Mr Hu. He should have changed jobs two years ago, because the exposure to chemicals was not good for him. (That said, Mr Hu had remained safely in the corridor outside the apartment while his assistant with the spray-gun took on the enemy inside.)

The trouble was that China's booming economy provided more enticing job opportunities. "There is just no one to replace me," Mr Hu said. "They would all rather work in the embassies."

Teresa Poole

protesters
mark
Burma
in blood

DEAN CHARLES

— Failed Burmese rebels shed blood on their own blood-stained banner to mark the eighth anniversary of the bloodiest days in a pro-democracy uprising.

Several members of a group marched during a protest of the Burmese embassy in Moscow and smeared their blood on the embassy wall, adding next to a banner.

The blood stains of a banner never to be sponged off the embassy wall, commemorated the 8 of August 1988, when reds of people were killed by government troops as they marched for democracy. The 8-8-88 pro-democracy movement gained much support from the international community.

Even yesterday, after Russian reinforcements arrived in the city, the guerrillas were putting up fierce resistance, declaring that this was their gift to the president who had promised to clear guerrillas from around

THE INDEPENDENT • FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 1996

international

Rebels 'dominate' Chechen capital

Fierce battles continued yesterday between Chechen rebels and Russian forces in the Chechen capital, Grozny, with grenade-launchers, mortars and automatic weapons. The rebels claimed that the Russians lost 80 armoured vehicles, nine helicopters and a plane. The Russians denied losing a plane, but admitted heavy losses, including at least 70 dead and several hundred injured.

The Moscow-backed deputy Interior Minister, Yuri Pligun, said up to 2,000 rebels were "dominating the situation" in central Grozny. It is unlikely that the rebel band, consisting of only a few hundred men, can hold the city against the far superior numbers of federal troops. But the mere fact that they have caused so much death and destruction was a severe blow to Boris Yeltsin on the eve of his inauguration today as Russia's re-elected president.

Even yesterday, after Russian reinforcements arrived in the city, the guerrillas were putting up fierce resistance, declaring that this was their gift to the president who had promised to

bring peace to the Caucasus, but who had allowed air-raids on Chechen villages within days of being returned to the Kremlin.

"We went in Yeltsin's direction during the elections, believing that he would even allow presidential elections on our territory," a Chechen field commander, with the *nom de guerre* of Rezan, was quoted in *Izvestia* as saying. "But it turns out that Yeltsin tricked everyone. Now we want to ruin his celebrations and remind all his guests that the war is continuing and that Chechen will never be conquered by force."

With the peace process in tatters, force was all Moscow had to offer yesterday. While the helicopter gunships, known as "crocodiles", fired rockets against rebel positions in the suburbs, army reinforcements, whose convoys had rumbled into Grozny overnight, fought to clear guerrillas from around

the compound of the pro-Moscow government in the city. A spokesman for the Russian command said the situation had improved since Wednesday when federal forces virtually lost control on the ground and could do little but attack the Chechens from the air. Even so, the leader of the raid, Shamil Basayev, notorious for having taken hundreds of civilians hostage in a hospital in southern Russia last year, declared scornfully that, if a Russian delegation wished to make peace with him, they would be safe as the city was in his hands.

The International Committee for the Red Cross said it was "extremely concerned" about wounded civilians left unattended during three days of fighting. Many civilians slipped out of Grozny before the rebels entered the city on Tuesday. But hundreds stayed and have been cowering in cellars throughout



Fighting back: A Chechen rebel fires a grenade launcher as the Russian offensive builds up in Grozny. (Photograph: AP)

Yangtse floods again, killing 2,000 villagers

TERESA POOLE
Peking

It seems to be an inevitable annual tragedy: China's summer rains begin, the Yangtze river and its tributaries rise to levels "not seen for decades", the dikes are breached, and terrible floods lay claim to central and southern provinces, killing thousands and wiping out whole villages and their crops.

In 1994 the summer flood death toll reached more than 5,000, and in 1995 almost 4,000.

After the downpour started last month, water levels rose quickly in half a dozen provinces. Around 2,000 people have died, but the number will inevitably rise, with more rain forecast and waters draining away slowly in some of the worst hit regions, exacerbating problems with disease.

Torrential rains have dangerously swollen three of China's biggest rivers and officials have warned against epidemics in the wake of the floods.

The waters of the Yellow River, known as "China's sorrow" for its devastating floods throughout history, had risen to a historic high following several weeks of rain, an official said. Millions have lost their homes and grain stocks.

Along the Yangtze, soldiers and civilians have been manning dikes around the clock in the hope of preventing a greater catastrophe. Medical and sanitation teams have urgently been distributing chlorine to the millions of people whose water supplies are now contaminated by sewage and rotting animals.

The destruction in recent years has been nothing compared to the 1931 flood, when 40 million people died. The 1931 flood is still the world's worst recorded natural disaster.

Kevin Rees, store manager at B&Q Hayes, said: "We have been

pared with the greatest Yangtze flood calamities earlier this century. Official statistics give the death toll of the 1931, 1935 and 1954 floods as more than 300,000. Flood prevention has improved in recent years, but vulnerable regions still suffer."

In Guangxi's Rooshui prefecture, for instance, people struggle to rebuild dikes and irrigation systems from year to year, only to be hit by even worse flooding. It is a financially ruinous cycle. The total official economic cost of the 1995 floods was more than £13bn.

Part of the problem is that dikes and embankments built in the 1950s, after repeated repairs simply cannot cope with bigger floods. This year, in Hubei alone, 300km of dikes have been destroyed.

Peking does not like to admit that a great deal more might be done. But, in an unprecedented step, the central government this year authorised provinces to approach international agencies themselves for help, an apparent admission that the situation was even more serious than usual. At the same time, however, the State Planning Minister, Chen Jinhuai, has talking reassuringly of a record "bumper harvest".

For most Chinese officials, the annual flood disasters are held up as the best argument in favour of building the controversial Three Gorges Dam.

But quite apart from the doubts raised by environmentalists, those millions who live in flood-prone regions could be forgiven for wondering whether more might not be done for them in the 15 years before the dam's scheduled completion.

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you could have added a few
more to your list of informers
("Watching me, watching you", 6
August); hints, who now have to
report suspicions of money
laundering - it's a crime for them
not to (Criminal Justice Act 1988);
photograph developers, who are

Don't leave the best and brightest guessing

Those first year undergraduates will not be chuffed. Imagine it. Tanned and skiny after basket weaving in Africa, or learning Spanish in Cuba, they return bearing photos and trendy ethnic objects, eager to show off to their school. Yet to their horror, since they deferred their entry, the universities have had a change of heart. A £300 bill for top-up fees awaits them when they arrive.

It's bound to happen sooner or later if we go on like this. Tony Higgins, chief executive of the University and Colleges Admissions Service, warns that it might happen in 1997; so the travelling teenagers concerned are the ones awaiting their A-levels this week. But in drift into a haphazard system of top-up fees by default would be the worst possible response to the financial problems that universities and students face.

From the universities' point of view, it is understandable. Their funds per student have been squeezed year by year as they meet the government demands to take a huge numbers of extra students. The rise in teenagers staying on for higher education has been phenomenal; and is one of the few great and enduring educational achievements of this government. One in three teenagers now goes to university. However, the government's failure adequately to finance the expansion has created a crisis.

Universities such as Oxford, Cambridge and the LSE, who rely on expensive intensive tuition methods, or who

hope to compete for top international academics, are struggling to find the money they need to keep the standard of research and education as high as they need. They have tried selling chairs in everything from genetics to political philosophy, seeking sponsorship for research, selling academic advice, and scrapping donations from former students. The latest wheeze, touted often over the last few years, is to charge new undergraduates as well.

But make no mistake: allowing universities unilaterally to start charging fees, because we failed to come up with something better, would be a terrible mistake. Middle-class parents will pay the money up front to make sure their children still get a good education. But those who cannot afford it will turn down their premier place in favour of a cheaper institution, and possibly less challenging course, somewhere else.

Whatever happens, we must not return to a situation where elite education is distributed according to families' ability to pay, rather than merit. Nothing is more likely to restore the worst features of the British class system. Everyone knows a great education from an elite university can win you a nice job, high earnings and the prospect of continuing power and privilege. Poor but brilliant young people should not be denied their chance to compete for such prizes by an inhibiting charge.

Nor will things look much more promising if these prospective students have to borrow on the private market.

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Should they stumble finding work when they leave, interest rates could rocket upwards, leaving them completely in hock to the banks. Cautious but top-class prospective students could still miss out on the best education in their fear of incurring heavy debts.

What are the alternatives? One would be for the expensive universities to concede their elite status, and muck in with everyone else. All that money invested in the education of a few clever clogs could be more fairly distributed across everyone else instead. But there has already been too much levelling down in the British education system already, before the bright people get to university. It would be a dis-

aster to inflict that culture on universities, too. Moreover, it would be economic idiocy not to continue taking advantage of the excellence in our best universities. Higher taxes are not an option in the present climate. But if we are to protect the best, we need to pay for the best.

David Blunkett has suggested stopping grants and replacing them with graduate loans instead. The savings on student maintenance could presumably be channelled back into university funding. So long as repayment schedules are linked to earnings and ability to pay, it should not prove an obstacle to many students. After all, why shouldn't graduates bear some of the burden of their education, so

long as it doesn't deter them from taking the degree. The chances are they will earn considerably more for the rest of their lives, thanks to the money the state has invested in them. Australia, the United States and countless other countries operate student loan schemes, where graduates gradually pay off their debts throughout their lives.

A fully fledged graduate tax would be even fairer. Suppose graduates had to pay, say, an extra 1 per cent a year for 15 years, rather than repaying regular amounts until their debts were paid off. Then the City broker would pay more in total than the teacher. The amount graduates contributed would reflect the personal financial reward they received across their lifetime from their degree. But it would not take away the incentive to get that degree in the first place.

Alternatively, the government could allow universities to charge different top-up fees and help students to borrow to cover them as well as maintenance. Why not let the Oxford graduate borrow more than the Strathclyde graduate, in order to pay for that more expensive Oxbridge education? The average Oxbridge graduate earns more later in life.

Whatever the options, whatever the alternatives, we could do with a little more guidance from our politicians. David Blunkett has set out his stall. The Government, on the other hand, has ducked behind Sir Ron Dearing, who is due to report on the funding of universities well after the next election. Uni-

versities would be completely wrong to institute top-up fees unilaterally before we have all seen and discussed Sir Ron's report.

We cannot all bury our heads in sand waiting for the venerable Sir Ron. Politicians should be leading the public discussion over the direction of higher education, not trailing around after increasingly desperate vice-chancellors. The future of this year's A-level students is already at stake.

Rich friends in hot places

Climb the greasy pole of politics, and your holidays suddenly change. Look at this year's getaways. The lower ranks carry on much as before. Ann Widdecombe is walking Wales. No surprise there, except that she is travelling by day-light. Harriet Harman plans cassoulets in the Dordogne, John Prescott will be taking a Short break.

But Tony and John are a different matter. For them the electronic gates of millionaire's villas in (respectively) Tuscany and the Riviera swing silently open. Which prompts an odd question: what is it about rich people that makes party leaders want to share their holes with them? And what is it about party leaders that makes them such good house-guests? It is a puzzle.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rich rewards for parents of twins

Sir: I would not want expectant mothers of twins to be too depressed after reading Ruth Picardie's article (7 August). Twins certainly change your life, but so does any excursion into parenthood.

My own identical girls are now 10 and they have been a joy and a challenge since their birth. I can remember sitting with my husband in the hospital canteen having a "last" meal before taking them home, and reflecting on the quote "the condemned ate a hearty breakfast".

We progressed through the early days of desperately trying to breast feed both and ending up with the sensible compromise of breast at alternate feeds during the day but definitely a bottle each for the night feed, and a bottle of Guinness for me! We passed on through the fascinating spectacle of the girls alternately being the "leader" of the pair, and then on to rota for who sits on Mummy's lap, who has their hair washed first, who has first pick of the hand-me-down clothes etc.

The rewards of parenthood are double for the parents of twins. It is all certainly hard work, but support is always there from the health visitors at the beginning; through neighbours and friends (even if Gramma no longer lives round the corner); through the local twins' club (a branch of TABA, the Twins and Multiple Births Association), always a rich source of practical and moral support; and through teachers, for whom twins always hold fascination.

Parents of twins will learn to compromise, to prioritise, not worry about the non-essentials in life, and emerge hopefully intact as a family with two children who, possibly because they have to fight for your attention, value it all the more and become your loving friends. A rich reward indeed.

ANERIE NEWMAN

West Sussex

Sir: As a twin, I might be expected to be shocked by the abortion of one twin. However, I am rather outraged by the voices raised in opposition. Why is it that whenever the words "ethics" and "rights" are mentioned in this context, it always means a reduction in our rights to act as we see fit? Maybe the woman involved will feel bad afterwards, but this will probably have more to do with the social pressure from groups such as the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, than with her abortion. She might have felt a lot worse if her own life, and that of her children, was ruined by her failure to cope with the twins.

I am for a moral approach, as I am sure are most people, but this should mean the right of adults to make decisions for themselves, and take the consequences.

DR DAVID HALL

Newcastle upon Tyne

The long list of British informers

Sir: You could have added a few more to your list of informers ("Watching me, watching you", 6 August): hints, who now have to report suspicions of money laundering - it's a crime for them not to (Criminal Justice Act 1988); photograph developers, who are

on the lookout for dodgy pictures: schools, if they suspect drug dealing or use; housing authorities, who must report suspected illegal immigrants; travel agents, who have signed a deal with customs and excise to report suspect travel agents; employers, who are about to sign up to stop illegal immigrants; social workers who suspect child abuse; airline officials who suspect illegal travellers; solicitors, who should even break with legal privilege if, say, a child is being abused or is about to be abducted; doctors, who might spot drunken drivers, the Inland Revenue (the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to apologise when they offered information to the police back in 1989); and journalists, always being asked for video footage taken at demonstrations, riots and so on (to their credit they often refuse).

We can't get enough of it.

T. THOMAS
Leeds
West Yorkshire

Sir: With reference to Sara Maitland's article on benefit fraud ("Beat-a-Cheat is not the village bobby", 7 August), she obviously has no experience of living on a council estate, particularly in a small village, where she implies that anonymous helplines are unjustified.

Until recently my parents lived opposite a man who had illegally acquired a car which had been specially adapted for a handicapped person, complete with a wheelchair lift. Much as they, and most of the other neighbours, would have liked to have brought this to the attention

of the appropriate authorities, and had the car re-assigned to a genuine case, they were too afraid of retaliation to do so.

In a more serious vein, when my mother called the police about some young children (all under 10 years old) sniffing glue near their back garden, they had milk bottles thrown at them and the back fence set on fire, a frightening experience for anyone, particularly horrible for someone in their late seventies.

GERALDINE BLAKE
London W13

Sir: You seem to suggest that wacky schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch are turning us into a nation of snitches. What is wrong with citizens keeping an eye out for the safety of themselves and those around them? Isn't that just the sort of spirit we want to reintroduce, after the rampant greed and individualism of the Eighties?

MATTHEW NEWNHAM
Edinburgh

Sir: There is something deeply unsavoury about the benefit fraud hotline. I think it is the Government's job to correctly ascertain who is entitled to benefit and who isn't. If some builders, plumbers, and decorators are supposedly moonlighting while claiming benefit, surely it is the Benefits Agency which is at fault for not sufficiently investigating the claimants in the first place.

MICHAEL D MITCHELL
Flockwell Heath
Buckinghamshire

Where have all the workers gone?

Sir: Colin Brown and Diane Coyle (report, 7 August) tell us about the Bank of England's warning on interest rates. However, the quarterly report also had something interesting in say about employment.

The Tories claim to have achieved a jobs miracle, thanks to deregulation. They say that unemployment has come down faster than in previous business cycles.

Then along come the Bank to burst their bubble. Yesterday's report said: "Almost the entire net performance in the 1990s compared to the 1980s was unaccounted for... by the rise in inactivity." In plain English, unemployment has been falling not because more jobs have been created but because more people have left the workforce altogether.

As Bob Dylan might ask: "Where have all the workers gone?" Much of the drop can only be explained by people being driven off the benefit register and therefore off the records altogether. A great Tony Blair disappearing trick rather than an economic miracle!

The Labour Party is committed to help people out of benefit into jobs - including 250,000 young people - rather than drive people into the statistical twilight zone.

JOHN PRESCOTT MP
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
House of Commons
London SW1

Lasdun for the National Theatre

Sir: We, Emeritus, past and present Professors of Architecture, join in strongly endorsing Jonathan Glancey's plea in "The secret facelift: can you see the join?" (30 July) that the trustees of the National Theatre should henceforth employ its architect, Sir Denys Lasdun, at least as a formal consultant in their moves to upgrade this widely acclaimed monument of drama and of architecture particularly by young in heart.

As trustees their responsibility is to hold the spirit of this outstanding example of Rational Modern Architecture as it exists in perpetuity. This does not mean falling prey to today's commercialism in the name of "user-friendliness." Despite the planning consent achieved and the Lottery funding promised, benefactors who might have helped the NT with the further 25 per cent of monies needed are asked to consider the reality of the altered building's meaning to generations yet to come.

PATRICK HODGKINSON, GORDON BENSON, NEAVE BROWN, PETER CLEGG, PETER COOK, EDWARD CULLINAN, TREVOR DANNATT, SIR JAMES DUNBAR, TONY FRETTON, CHARLES MACCULLAGH, IZI METZSTEIN, IVOR RICHARDS, JOSEPH RYKERT, DAVID SHALEV, ROBERT TAVERNER, MICHAEL WILFORD
University of Bath

Surfing UK

Sir: I was most surprised to read the opening sentence of "You don't have to be an Australian" (6 August): "Legend has it that a group of travelling Australian lifeguards brought surfing to Britain in the early Sixties".

In 1949 I was stationed as a national serviceman in Cornwall, and during that gloriously hot summer I and my fellow officer pals took every opportunity in off-duty hours to dash to the beaches of Newquay or Polzeath, where surfboards could be hired quite cheaply at the cheerful shops which also sold ice-cream, beach huts, spades and buckets.

As beginners, we preferred the less crowded sands of Polzeath to those at Newquay, where the many surfers were a menace to the swimmers and paddlers. Even there, however, I never saw surfers standing up on their boards, and it may be this more difficult art that the Australians introduced later.

PETER COOPER
Norwich

Olympic wisdom

Sir: In the light of the recent articles on the commercialism prevalent at the Atlanta Olympic Games, might I offer the following from Montaigne: "Pythagoras was wont to say, that our life retires to [resembles] the great and populous Assembly of the Olympic Games, wherein all exercise the Glory of the Prize in those Contests, and others carry Merchandise to sell for profit." MIR SUMMERMEL
Peter
Southampton, Hampshire

Why the royals can't be like us

Sir: Melvyn Bragg is right ("Prisoners of the fourth estate", 5 August). This country needs a monarchy but the royal family will have to reform itself if it is to survive through the next century.

The occult that the royals must grasp is that they can not be like the rest of us. It is their misfortune to have been born into an image-hungry and media-dominated age but they do nothing themselves to discourage the spotlight of attention.

If there is a point to a modern monarchy, it is as a politically neutral focus for national loyalties. It is the royal family's duty to provide us with that focus. The media needs a clear image: the enthroned monarch surrounded by a family committed to royal service; a symbol demonstrating dedication, self-sacrifice and austerity; a family freed from the everyday cares that their subjects endure, but bared from the everyday pleasures of those same subjects.

It is a great thing to know one's place. It is not the place of a royal to tell us how difficult life is or how the country should be run or what constitutes good architecture. Such chatter can safely be left to the rest of us fortunate enough to be born of bumble stock.

Duty has never been easy or pleasant. This century millions of our countrymen and women died doing their duty. They leave a lot to live up to. It is only by demonstrating a similar commitment to duty that the royal family has any chance of winning back our respect. So long as they insist on behaving like film stars or media celebrities they will be treated as such.

RICK STROUD
London SW10

Stamps: may the best woman win

Sir: The question "Is Margot Fonteyn a better woman than Vivien Leigh?" (7 August) surely does not arise given that, as you report, Vivien Leigh has already had the honour of being commemorated on a postage stamp. You would also have helped clarify the question if you had emphasised that the list from which the five women was chosen was made up of people who had been born, as well as died, in the 20th century. But the absence of Barbara Hepworth from the long list ("Who they could have chosen") is the most mystifying of all.

analysis

Even if there is intelligent life out there, let's not take the dangerous and expensive step of trying to reach it, argues Charles Arthur

Let the Martians come to us

Daniel Goldin, the head of the US space agency Nasa, is not a man to let the occasion for a few grandiloquent words slip easily by. So he opened Wednesday's press conference in Washington, called to announce some plausible evidence that there was once life on Mars, with a few well-chosen high-octane phrases.

"I have been speaking to world leaders of space," he said. "Some of them were almost childlike in their excitement... I invited them to join us... In the next decade our objective is to send an armada of spacecraft to the other planets in our solar system, and detect planets around other stars."

Following the two-hour exposition – which amounted to a crash course in planetary evolution theory and techniques of scanning electron microscopy – the media were sold on the idea of getting to Mars. So were some of the scientists lined up to speak about their paper.

"We are talking about exploration," one intoned gravely, clearly also stricken with the grandiloquence virus. "It is important that this country keeps its aims of exploration, and the pioneer spirit. There are new worlds to explore in space, but we have to be prepared to invest in them. When we lose that will, such nations perish."

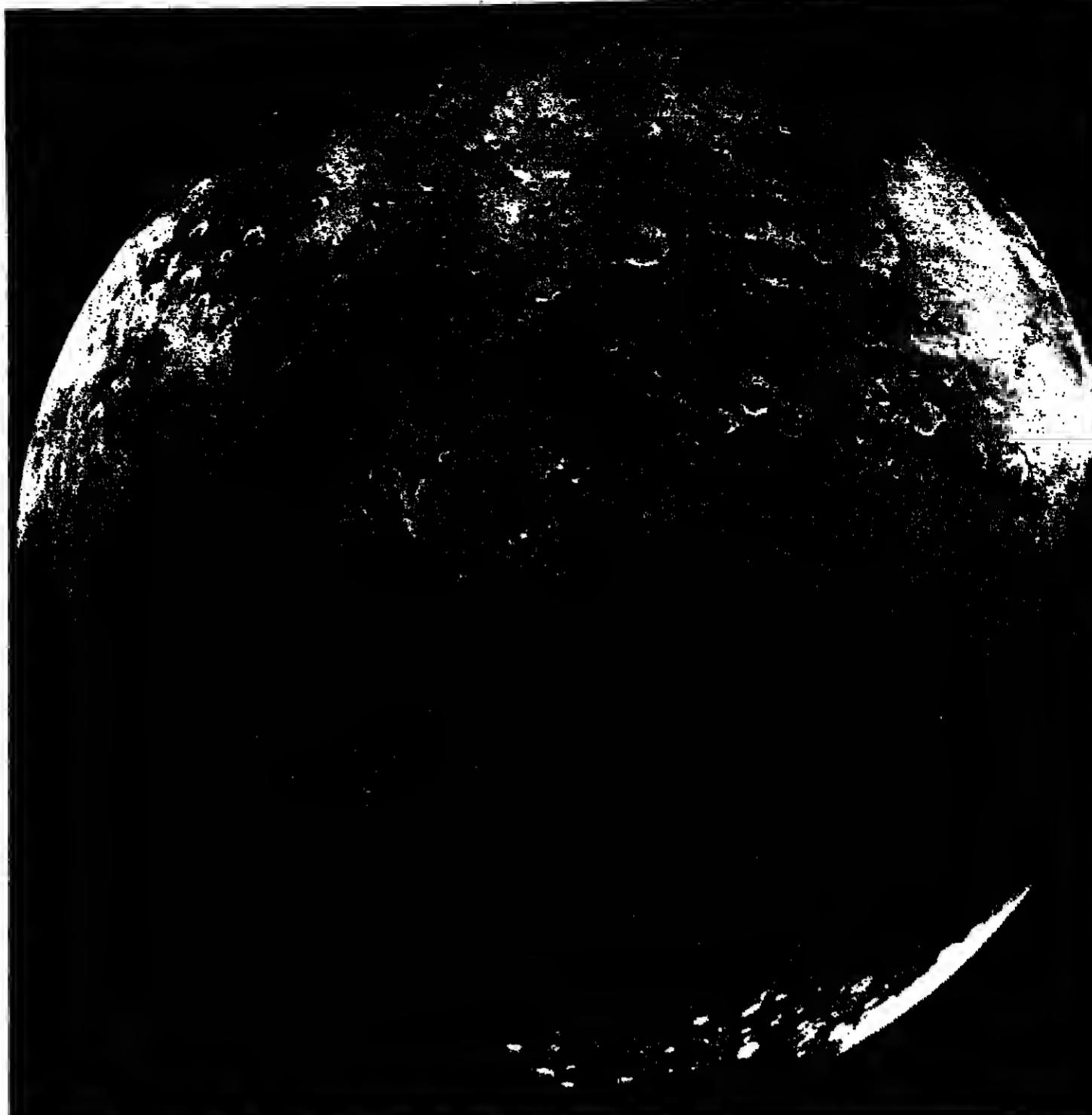
Meanwhile, Bill Clinton, supping the zeitgeist and no doubt with one eye on the feel-good factor in this election year, made a Kennedy-like pronouncement: "I am determined the American space programme will put its full intellectual power and technological prowess behind the search for further evidence of life on Mars." He told an eager group of reporters.

And just for good measure, Mr Goldin wrapped it all up with the declaration: "At the emotional level, we are a very bold nation. Nasa will be ready to take the next step. If we have to take sample missions earlier than expected, we will do it. If we have to dig into the surface of Mars, we will. If we have to do that digging with humans, we will – safely."

Pew. While I had been aware that the US was on a high after its coverage of the Olympics, I hadn't thought they really wanted to enter the interplanetary high jump. My first reaction, listening to those stirring words a safe 6,000 miles away, was that the participants ought to be tested for excess testosterone.

For although Mr Goldin might make it sound as though heading off to Mars would just be a question of getting NBC to do the coverage and inviting a few countries round to help in the competition, the fact is that nobody who matters is in any hurry to get people on Mars – even if this new research is confirmed as correct (which it still hasn't been).

Why the lack of urgency? Because sending people to Mars would be dangerous, enormously expensive, and most unlikely to tell us anything that we cannot find out already.



New world: Nasa's chief makes it sound easy for us to send men to Mars, but the reality is a little different

Nasa/Reuters

care, most notably. Nasa has not escaped those cuts. Is it really sensible to allow signs of life (which, remember, are not proof positive) to stampede us into spending money that might be better spent on science at home – or even on other humans at home?

It could be that the wisest move would be to keep examining the samples that we have, and to stay with the approach that served us well in this case: let the aliens come to us. But if they do, it might be sensible to be wary.

With 100 billion or so Sun-like stars in the Milky Way, the odds of life having emerged around one, or

many, of them is very high. In that case, the odds of other intelligent life having emerged must also be very high. We are presently beaming out signals to space proclaiming our existence: TV programmes from the 1950s have by now passed several thousand stars.

As Malcolm Young, professor in psychology at the University of Newcastle, remarked to me yesterday: "We are presently tweeting loudly like nestlings in a wood in which there may be hungry cats."

Biologists, he said, call this a failure of cryplicity. Nestlings that survive

wise they shut up (or get eaten). "Even if the transmissions can't be decoded by our audience, the fact of their existence means there are resources in this system that could be of significant interest."

It starts to sound rather worrying. Some people argue that any aliens that could reach us would already have the capability to destroy themselves – but would have evolved far enough not to use it. Evolution doesn't work that way, Young retorts. "You could say the same about us, but would you like to be a tiger, white rhino, or mountain gorilla?"

It's all reminiscent of the science

fiction short story which tells of a race of aliens that comes in peace, ends war, cures disease, and makes humanity stronger, fitter, better. A few lucky people are invited to visit the home planet – a veritable Eden, they are told. The fact that they don't return seems to prove it. One cynic finds an alien hook by enormous effort he manages to translate the title: "To Serve Man". Impressed that altruism really has arrived, he volunteers for the next trip out.

Unfortunately, by the time his number comes up he has translated the first few words. It's a cookery book.

We need more proof

THE CASE AGAINST

If it can be shown that life in our own solar system has appeared not on one planet but on two, the inference is that it will appear on any planet where conditions are right. And the implications here are of vital importance both scientifically and philosophically.

On the other hand, we have to exert a certain amount of caution. The meteorite has lain in the Antarctic for thousands of years, and it certainly came from space. But did it come from Mars?

It is quite true that the composition and characteristics of this meteorite tell us very well with what we believe the Martian surface to be like. Yet we have no positive proof, and I am bound to say that I have definite reservations.

I think we must wait until we can obtain samples that we are quite certain come from Mars. We need to send up an unmanned probe, land it on Mars and bring it back with samples. This was done long ago by the Russians with regard to the moon, and I have little doubt that we can do the same with Mars within the next 10 years.

Even if we do find evidence of life, it may not be possible to nail down the exact nature of the life.

There may well be life on Mars – there may even be primitive life there now. But we can't be sure. There may also be

nothing there.

There may also be life on Mars – there may even be primitive life there now. But we can't be sure.

There may also be

nothing there.

Plans for a force to be sent to the zone threaten to be implemented by the Greenpeace campaign. The plan is ahead of a bid by Cyprus on Sunday to become the Cyprus

to vote in a return the West Army ruler Captain government in July after the coup. The coup was to be prepared for by the coup.

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I think the way

Industry view: Graduates get ahead on jobs front 19
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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

business¹⁵

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BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098

SFO raid Hinchliffe mansion home

BY PAUL FARRELLY

Police raided the Sheffield headquarters of controversial entrepreneur Stephen Hinchliffe yesterday as the Serious Fraud Office announced a criminal investigation into the collapse two months ago of his Facia retail empire.

SFO officers and detectives from South Yorkshire police's commercial branch drove away a vanload of documents from Parkhead Hall, the sumptuous Sheffield mansion from which Mr Hinchliffe ran Facia and his extensive web of private companies that also form a key part of the police enquiry.

Four other addresses were searched, including Mr Hinchliffe's homes in Sheffield and London, and that of Christopher Harrison, Facia's finance director. Citing "operational reasons", the SFO and police declined to comment on the substance of the allegations.

Sources close to the case, however, said the investigation related to alleged theft of assets of millions of pounds from Facia and other matters linked to the running of the group.

"Search warrants were executed today at five premises connected with Facia Limited in Sheffield and central London," the SFO confirmed. "The Serious Fraud Office together with South Yorkshire police have begun an investigation into Facia and related compa-

nies. No arrests have been made."

Mr Hinchliffe could not be contacted yesterday and was said by his office to be on holiday, thought to be in London. The SFO is urgently seeking the co-operation of both into the inquiry.

The day's dramatic events follow ten weeks of investigation by accountants KPMG into Facia's and Mr Hinchliffe's affairs.

The group, which included Sock Shop and the Salisburys' luggage chain, collapsed into receivership at the beginning of June, owing £30m to banks and suppliers.

The receivers have been investigating up to £10m of loans to Mr Hinchliffe's private companies and other expenses, including holidays and helicopter fees, charged to Facia.

They are also investigating the alleged disappearance of payments made to Facia by sellers of businesses to the group.

These are understood to include compensation for lease obligations - so-called "reverse premiums" - which allegedly never found their way to the group.

KPMG partner Tony Thompson, who is heading the receivership, declined to comment on the SFO move last night, but confirmed the bank had passed documents to the regulators.

"Liaison with the police, SFO and the Department of

United finds a friendly Refuge

NIC CIRUTTI

United Friendly and Refuge Assurance, two insurers competing in the dwindling home service market, yesterday decided to merge into a £1.46bn company with the loss of up to 1,800 jobs, a quarter of staff in both organisations.

The two companies said the merger, expected to take place in September, would lead to cost savings benefiting both shareholders and policyholders. The new organisation will be called United Assurance.

In a separate move, more than a million Refuge policyholders will share in a £10m windfall, paid because of the strength of the insurer's long-term business funds. The bonuses will be added to their value of their policies. Refuge said a 20-year endowment taken out in 1981, with a sum assured of £8,000, would be allocated an extra £763.

A further £430m surplus,

known as "orphan assets", has been identified as attributable to the company's shareholders. However, Refuge stressed the money would not be paid out immediately but would be used to finance group activities.

The merger highlights the long-running contractions being

suffered by the UK insurance industry, hit by rising costs and over-supply in an increasingly competitive market.

Both United Friendly and Refuge operate in the same area of the market, servicing mainly low-income clients, whose premiums are often collected at their homes each month.

United and Refuge sell mainly life assurance, but United has a general insurance arm providing building contents and household products. It quit the British motor market in May.

The combined organisation will have some 2.8m clients, with 26,500 under management.

George Mack, the new chief executive in the merged organisation, said: "We intend this merger to obtain significant economies of scale."

Of the merged organisation's 7,000 staff, about a quarter will lose their jobs. Some 100 offices will close, while United's head office in South London will transfer to Refuge's headquarters in Wimborne, Dorset.

Mr Mack said that no decisions had been made on which staff - at any level - would remain or leave the organisation.

"We will make our decision purely on merit, without favouring either side," he said.

Refuge's head office in Wimborne, Dorset, has been sold to a

new chairman and chief executive. Photograph: Paul Bulley

High street rakes in cash as UK goes on shopping spree

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Rank got a cool reception from the City yesterday for new chief executive Andrew Teare's strategic review of the leisure and entertainment group. Despite most of the details being well flagged over the last week or so, the shares closed 27p lower at 441p, a 6 per cent decline on the day.

As expected, Rank signalled its intention to put its remaining 20 per cent stake in photocopier group Rank Xerox up for sale. The holding is in the books at £930m although if Xerox chooses to buy in the minority, as Rank hopes, it is expected to pay rather more for complete control.

In order to avoid a sizeable tax liability of maybe £200m, Rank will create a new holding company, Rank Group, to sit above two operating companies, Rank Organisation, which will continue to hold the Rank Xerox stake and is up for sale, and a grouping of all its other operations.

Mr Teare also spelled out

plans to raise £300m from the disposal of peripheral businesses, including its Shearings coach holiday arm. Speculation is growing that Rank plans to ditch the Pinewood film studios.

Rank plans to focus on four managed businesses - film, mainly duplication operations serving Hollywood studios; holidays, including Butlin's and Haven brands; UK recreation, where names include Odeon, Mecca and Top Rank; and Hard Rock, the themed restaurants group.

Rank has also decided to maintain Rank's link with MCA, with whom the group is developing the Universal City theme park in Florida. It has also agreed in principle to take a stake in a Universal park in Osaka, Japan.

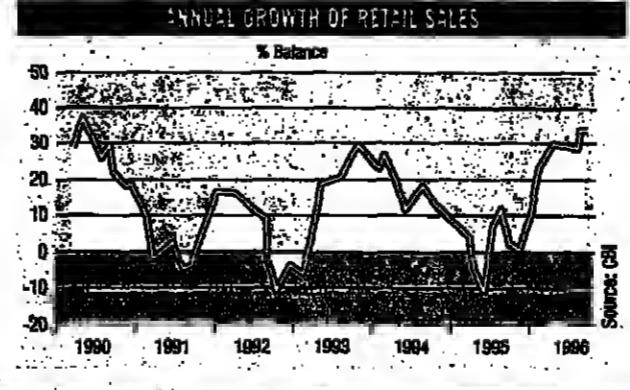
The interim results for the six months to June were heavily distorted by the profit last year on the sale of part of the Rank Xerox stake and the decision this year to book the dividend from that company rather than Rank's nominal share of its profits.

The results, ahead of official figures for retail sales, add to the weight of evidence pointing to

a significant upturn in consumer spending.

The Bank of England this week cited buoyant business surveys as one of the reasons it thought interest rates would have to rise at some point, and preferably sooner rather than later. Four recent surveys of manufacturing have signalled that a recovery is also under way in industry.

The balance of retailers



33 per cent, expecting an increase in orders this month is the highest recorded for nearly eight years.

The only sectors not to report a July pick-up in sales compared with a year earlier were newsagents and off-licences. Grocers, clothes and shoe shops said they enjoyed a second successive month of strong growth.

The sectors linked to the housing market - furniture and carpets, DIY, china and household goods - said good sales growth continued, though at a substantially lower level for furniture and carpet retailers.

The survey also reported the second successive month of stronger-than-expected sales by motor traders. Orders placed with suppliers rose sharply in July and are expected to climb further in August. Wholesalers' volumes picked up after a slowdown in June.

The pound rose by more than a pence to DM2.3005 yesterday.

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**INSTRUMENTS
FOR PROFESSIONALS**

STOCK MARKETS		INTEREST RATES		CURRENCIES	
FTSE 100	Dow Jones	Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US dollar	
3611.40	+0.30	+0.0	3657.10	3632.30	4.10
4318.60	+0.60	+0.2	4558.00	4016.30	3.49
1907.00	+1.00	+0.1	1945.40	1816.50	3.97
2118.63	+4.36	+0.2	2244.36	1854.96	3.13
1884.43	+1.22	+0.1	1924.17	1791.95	3.91
5685.75	-32.92	-0.6	5778.00	5032.94	2.20
20731.31	+253.72	+1.2	22868.60	19734.70	0.74
1164.36	+35.82	+0.3	11594.99	10204.67	0.45
1116.35	+6.26	+0.2	1283.48	2253.36	1.81
2538.15					

Source: F1 Information

MAIN PRICE CHANGES		OTHER INDICATORS	
Prices	Yester Day	Day's chg.	Var. Age
Oil Brent \$	39.9	-0.10	16.27
Gold \$	388.20	0.00	384.30
Gold £	250.52	-1.23	241.93
			5.70pc 5.75

business

Reed has nowhere to go but down

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Reed Elsevier is getting dangerously "boring" - good boring, of course, but dull none the less. How else to characterise yet another set of robust figures with half-year underlying profits up 12 per cent and another faultless acquisition, in the form of legal publisher Tolley?

The market had been hoping for a big deal, with the names of Reuters, Bloomberg, even Pearson bandied about as takeover targets. In the event, £100m for United News & Media's Tolley, while certainly expensive, is small beer for a £600m company with net debt of a paltry £250m and interest covered a mere 19 times.

The City had become used to the company deriving its earnings growth in equal measure from acquisitions and continuing businesses. But since the decision to sell newspapers and consumer magazines, the trend has been toward relying on organic growth to push ahead. Yesterday's interim figures prove that Reed doesn't need to buy companies to keep up the momentum.

There were a few weak spots of course. The travel information business saw profits decline as the general market moved away from Reed's "hard copy" products and toward on-line services it has yet to develop fully. But management has started to tackle the problem, and expects to reverse the trend by next year, with the introduction of new electronic products.

On the whole, the main businesses showed sharp growth, with legal and other professional product lines leading the way. The excellent Lexis/Nexis subsidiary - one of the best buys Reed ever made - is a clear market leader in the area of "must-have" information, for which customers are willing, indeed, to pay a premium.

The Tolley acquisition in the UK complements the existing business group under Reed's Butterworth subsidiary. Where the former is strong on the so-called "first point of reference" end of the market, Butterworth dominates the specialist legal and tax sectors. The combination also allows Reed to market the Tolley products - tax guides, for example - to its existing business client base.

The problem is that Reed is performing so well there is really nowhere to go but down. It is a highly rated stock, with a strong - indeed near unsellable - position in its key markets of professional and business information. Those markets offer huge profit margins to the leaders, and come complete with high barriers to entry for any would-be competitor.

This year, the City expects profits of £810m, rising to perhaps £920m. At car-

rent year earnings of about 56p a share, the stock is on a multiple of 20 times - justifiable given the quality of earnings, and the consistency of returns, but the upside cannot be huge.

Dull outlook at Westminster

Westminster Healthcare's unsuccessful bid for rival nursing home operator Goldsborough last month put the City spotlight on a relatively neglected sector. The rationale of the offer was that after a boom period, nursing home operators have run into a tougher market as local authority healthcare budgets are squeezed. The new growth areas are home care services, where patients are treated at home, or other short-term care facilities where fee income is higher.

Westminster is trying to diversify into these new areas and the bid for Goldsborough would have provided a handy short-cut. The bid's failure cost £2.7m in fees which will appear as an except-

tional item in next year's accounts. But the message Westminster was trying to get across yesterday is that the nursing home market is not the dead end some have portrayed.

Results for the year to May showed a 27 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £17.6m. The company says its occupancy rates have picked up again after a flu epidemic and that the market is due for a shake-out. Chief executive Pat Mortoo says the fears over the nursing home sector are overdone. He sees some capacity coming out and demand continuing to grow. He also feels the squeeze on local authority budgets will ease. This may be wishful thinking but Mr Mortoo points out that the sector grew by 7 per cent last year. Encouraging, but Westminster admits that its new homes are taking longer to fill than three years ago. With 500 new beds coming on to the market from Westminster since this year, that is hardly going to ease the over-supply problem.

Westminster is trying to expand its non-nursing home activities. Fourteen per cent of group operating profits came from specialist services compared to just 2 per cent the year before. Next year

the company hopes to boost that figure to over 20 per cent. It has made some sound acquisitions in areas such as disabled housing though there is a dearth of quality companies for Westminster to snap up.

Westminster's shares have fallen sharply following the bid, though they closed 1p higher yesterday at 281p. On forecast profits of £22m they trade on a forward rating of 10. Unexciting.

McKechnie just keeps growing

McKechnie has shaken off the tag of Midlands metal-basher and looks in danger of acquiring a new image as an acquisitive little conglomerate. It has certainly been a busy year and yesterday's placing, acquisition and profits forecast capped a year in which it has already spent £70m in cash, a fair outlay compared with a market value of £300m.

No surprise in those circumstances that the latest deal - the £15.25m acquisition of industrial fastener maker Dzus - is to be funded with new shares, or that the company should take the opportunity to raise another £23.5m for the next purchase, which apparently won't be long in coming.

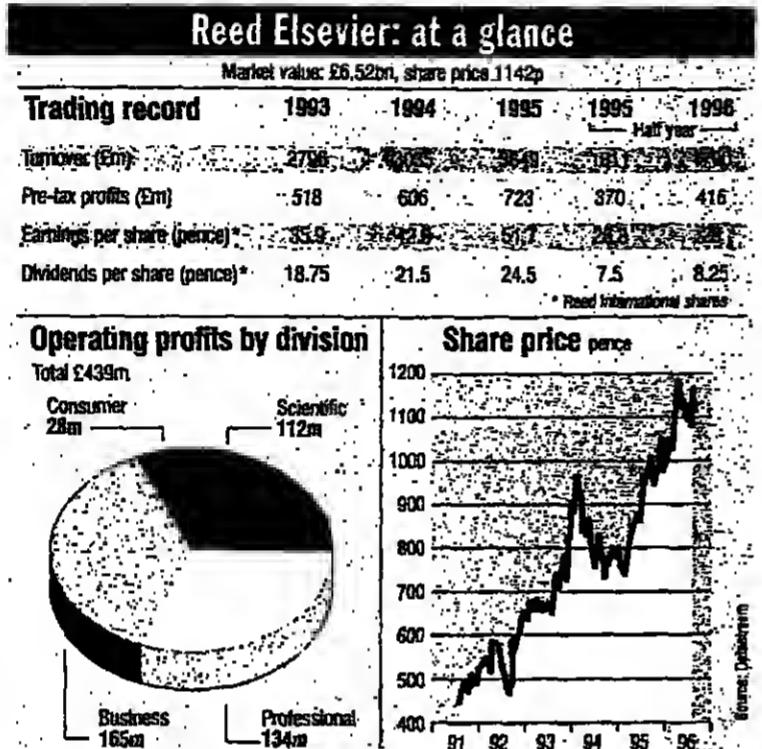
Dzus (pronounced Zeus) looks a good buy. Earnings-enhancing from day one, it occupies a nice little niche in the sort of heavy-duty clips that give quick and easy access in a whole range of applications - aircraft engines, the bit of carpet covering the tyre in your car boot, big computer installations. There is a good geographical spread to the business and a useful diversity of market sectors.

Investors seemed pretty relaxed about the deal and placing, adding 2p to the share price, which closed at 500p, 20p higher than the level at which the share issues are being pitched.

The fact that profits for the year to July just finished were confirmed at around market expectations of £49.5m helped.

McKechnie had a remarkably steady run over the past five years, growing earnings from 17p in 1991 to an estimated 37.5p for the year just ended. That is an attractive compound growth of over 15 per cent.

Compared with that rate of improvement, with more of the same to come according to forecasts, the shares trade on a relatively undemanding price/earnings ratio of 11. Don't expect any fireworks but this is a good share to tuck away.



TV crews devise ways to collar Eddie George

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Eddie George is well known among television economics reporters for hiding from the broadcast media whenever he is about to say something important.

The Governor of the Bank of England would prefer to address newspaper journalists when recommending that interest rates should go up, for instance, since the journalists' musings will only be read the next day.

Eddie's cover was blown this week when a sky TV crew from BSkyB turned up on the Governor's doorstep at home and prodded some comments from him about rates.

A rival, terrestrial broadcaster, that shall remain nameless then complained bitterly to the Bank about missing out. The Bank's spokesman retorted: "Well, what do you want us to do? Put an electronic dog collar on him? We can't control him, you know."

Tell the Governor, this is the way forward.

The Bank of England also has a spanking new suite of conference rooms - underground. A Bank spokesman welcomed journalists to it this week with the words: "Welcome to our new subterranean home."

It would be nice to say that the rooms previously formed a part of the bank's gold vaults, at least a James Bond-style nuclear bunker, but the truth is more prosaic - they were used to store furniture.

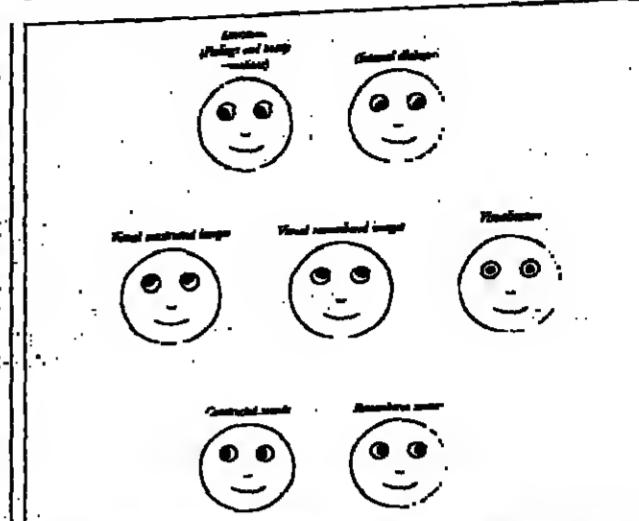
"You can't tunnel through the conference room walls to a sea of gold," the spokesman adds reassuringly.

Which is just as well, since the vast majority of the UK's gold reserves, totalling \$5.2bn, are stored in the Bank. So how deep do the vaults go? "A long way," says the spokesman.

For some years now the Chicago-based Leviathan has been pondering whether to spin off the Andersen Consulting arm, which is beginning to outgrow its audit-based parent.

Now Larry Weinbach,

chief executive of Andersen Worldwide, the umbrella



I had no idea selling life insurance could be so, well, groovy. The latest issue of *Prospect*, the monthly magazine from the Life Insurance Association, has an article titled: "Seeing, feeling and tuning in," by Ross McDevitt, a development manager with that well-known bunch of New Age hippies, Allecto Danbury.

The idea is that salespeople can deal more effectively with clients by observing the way their eyes move during a conversation (as illustrated above). For instance, someone in "visual" mode has three eye movements: "If you ask a visual to access some information from their past - 'How did you happen to join the company?' - they will tend to look up their left (visual access) or defocus, looking directly ahead. Conversely, if you ask them to construct or describe something in the future - 'Where do you see yourself in five years?' - their eyes tend to go up to their right (visual construct)." Reading this, my eyes went up to the ceiling. What does this mean?

Yes, but how far? "They won't even tell me."

Quite right too.

organisation for the two sides, has junked a simple demerger.

In its place the firm may split into a number of small "market focused" units. The proposal is to be unveiled to partners at their annual meeting next month.

Sceptics my question why you would go to all the bother of building the only truly global accountancy firm and then, when you had achieved this ultimate goal, promptly go and split it up again.

These guys charge an arm and a leg telling companies how to run themselves. Perhaps Andersen needs some help of its own.

Willis Corroon rejects calls for merger

NIC CICUTTI

Willis Corroon, one of the world's top six insurance brokers, yesterday turned its back on mergers with any of its main competitors as it announced a 6 per cent first-half rise in pre-tax profits to £70.6m.

The company said it would concentrate on growing in a number of chosen insurance market sectors around the world. It added that, where nec-

essary, it would go on the takeover trail itself if it felt that organic growth was not taking place fast enough.

John Reeve, executive chairman, said: "Notwithstanding considerable speculation as to the benefits of mergers between the big six global brokers, we have concluded after analysis of the issues that arguments in favour of such combinations are not compelling.

"In particular, cost economies

of scale from such mergers are not likely to be sufficient to confer significant competitive advantage."

However, a spokesman added that the position might change for Willis Corroon if others among the top six did come together.

Mr Reeve was speaking as Willis Corroon revealed a 2 per cent rise in brokerage and commission income of £365.2m in the first half of the year.

Excluding £2.4m from disposals of non-core businesses, profits from the group's operations was 4 per cent higher.

Willis Corroon said that in the second quarter of this year profits from continuing operations reached £20.1m, excluding disposals, 16 per cent up on the same period last year. Brokerage and fee revenue rose 2 per cent to £165.8m.

Mr Reeve said Willis Corroon had worked hard to add

business volume to compensate for the continuing reductions in premiums across all sectors.

Despite some signs of firmer rates in the marine sector, the company continues to predict premium falls of - at best - stable premiums in the period immediately ahead.

Mr Reeve said the group had carried out an internal review and a new organisational structure would be introduced later in the year.

Willis Corroon is backing Lloyd's of London's reconstruction and renewal programme and is pleased that it appears likely to be adopted.

The group expects to pay a five-year annual levy on its business, with a £2.6m payment due later this year. Its member agency expects to make a one-off contribution of £2.5m.

Both payments will be covered by the release of litigation funds no longer needed.

	Turnover £m	Pre-tax £m	EPS	Dividend
Brugge College (F)	15.2m (14.1m)	0.58m (-0.06m)	1.4p (-2.5p)	0.25p (0.01p)
Brugge For The Border (F)	19.0m (11.0m)	1.1m (1.0m)	3.2p (5.25p)	1.65p (1.45p)
Burlington Group (F)	- (-)	0.07m (0.08m)	0.44p (0.35p)	nil (-)
Centex Consulting (F)	19.8m (18.2m)	1.52m (0.72m)	1.54p (0.84p)	0.75p (0.5p)
Imperial (F)	- (-)	32.0m (25.8m)	9.1p (8.1p)	2p (1.75p)
Morgan Stanley (F)	119m (77.8m)	2.22m (1.26m)	5.52p (3.3p)	1.35p (0.85p)
Prudential (F)	940m (85.4m)	12.8m (4.44m)	10.1p (45.2p)	5p (4.75p)
Reed Elsevier (F)	1.70m (1.81m)	4.17m (3.70m)	29p (28.3p)	8.25p (7.5p)
Willis (F)	- (-)	3.4m (-0.78m)	6.8p (-3p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Westminster Healthcare (F)	98.1m (65.5m)	17.8m (13.8m)	23.5p (21.4p)	6p (5.4p)
Willis Corroon (F)	365m (358m)	70.6m (68.8m)	10.7p (9.7p)	1.65p (+)
Wyle (F)	185.8m (55.7m)	5.07m (1.88m)	8.8p (2.8p)	2.25p (1.25p)

(F) - Final (F) - Interim * Comparative figures for 1995

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INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

THE INDEPENDENT

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ways
George

The fatal error was made right at the start. The sponsors and the company were guilty of being too greedy by putting a price in the window that encouraged institutional shoppers to walk on by.

The spectacle of Kleinwort Benson forlornly wheeling the Somerfield orphan around the company's supermarket rivals in the vain hope that a trade sale might extract a higher price than a flotation rather puts the cap on one of the more humiliating new issues of recent years.

What makes it odder still is that the desparate ring-round of Tesco, Sainsbury's and Co took place long after Kleinwort and Somerfield had cut the offer price for a second time and finally got it underwritten. As sponsor of the issue, Kleinwort was clearly under a duty to maximise proceeds for the vendors. It also needed to protect its back against litigation should any of the debt-holders in Isosceles, Somerfield's parent company, claim that the business had been sold too cheaply and reach for their lawyers.

The fatal error, however, was made not at the close of the offer but right at the start. The sponsors and the company were guilty of being too greedy by putting a price in the window that encouraged institutional shoppers to walk on by.

When the inevitable happened and the price was cut for the first time, Kleinwort was on the run and the institutions knew it. Against a backdrop of volatile markets and desperation to get the offer away, all they had to do was sit back and wait for the price to be cut again. And so it was.

Kleinwort justified whittling down the price from 180-190p to 145p by citing the static of the markets. The excuse is only

partly borne out by reality. Between the setting of the indicative price and the final price the FTSE 100 index fell 1.7 per cent - hardly enough to justify a 22 per cent cut in the offer price.

Few players emerge from this débâcle unscathed. David Simons and his fellow directors saw their "beats robbing the bank" bonuses cut back; private investors were treated shabbily by not being allowed to buy more shares at the cheaper price, and Somerfield's banks ended up writing off more debt than they wanted to.

But Kleinwort comes out worst. What with the flop of the British Biotech rights issue, where it was also the sponsor, and the disaster of its European privatisation, trust, Kepif, Kleinwort is plainly going through something of a bad patch.

Simon Robertson, Kleinwort's chairman, can only hope and pray that Somerfield does not add still further to its woes by rocketing on an embarrassing premium when the shares start trading today.

Door-to-door insurance deal makes sense

For both shareholders and policyholders of Refuge and United Friendly, yesterday's merger looks like a win, win deal. It was also, perhaps, an inevitable one, even among the C1 and D social classes from which the two companies draw most of their

customers, life assurance has become a distinctly unfashionable thing. As a consequence, the pressure for consolidation and cost-cutting is on as never before.

Over the next couple of years the combined company plans to cut its workforce by about 25 per cent. Most of the benefit of that will go to policyholders. But there will be a lot left for shareholders too. Add that to the immediate benefits of the release of orphan assets and the effect of the merger will be to lift dividends by 35 per cent for Refuge shareholders and more than 50 per cent for investors in United Friendly. As the cost cuts begin to flow through, there will be more to follow.

The economics of scale to be had by merging in this sector of the market - which involves door-to-door collection of premiums, often in cash - are plainly substantial, but the same sort of logic applies throughout the life assurance industry. There are too many life assurance companies, supporting too many sales teams, chasing too small a market. Despite this, some of the drier predictions made a couple of years back at the time of commission disclosure - that the number of life insurers would halve by the end of the century through mergers and closures - are not coming to pass.

Many of the mutuals are digging in their heels and refusing to contemplate either takeover or merger. In the interests of consumer choice and competition, this is perhaps a good thing. If the deals that are creeping

through live up to expectations, however, the refuseniks may be forced to rethink their position. The smaller player is going to have to be something quite exceptional to survive in the intensely competitive market place that promises to develop.

Focusing on leisure is risky for Rank

Putting £50,000 into what was then the new business of photocopiers in the 1950s stands out as one of the greatest corporate investments of all time. On the basis of Rank's conservative £930m book valuation of its remaining interest in Rank Xerox, that initial punt on an interesting new technology is today worth the best part of £5bn.

Getting rid of the rump stake makes good sense both strategically and financially, but focusing on Rank's leisure and entertainment core makes the company considerably riskier. Not least because if you add in the £300m proceeds of other planned disposals, the new chief executive, Andrew Teare, has a worryingly fat chequebook to go with his understandably sketchy knowledge of the leisure business.

If he spends that money wisely, Rank could return to the top table of the British leisure industry from which it has been notably absent for years. But no one should underestimate the challenge, given the uninspiring springboard the rest of the group provides.

Best of the bunch is probably film duplication, and if Hollywood continues to churn out films like *Independence Day* and *Mission Impossible*, Rank will have no problem shipping at least the current million or so videos a day. The digital revolution means the video tape's day is numbered however, and this is probably a case of making hay while the sun shines.

Elsewhere Rank is like a snapshot of 1960s Britain, with a stable of squandered, under-invested and tired brands. Odeon, Butlin's, Top Rank, Mecca - it's hardly the starting point of choice for a man setting out to rebuild a leisure giant.

Hard Rock appears to have become the focus of Rank's attentions. Again buying in franchise operations and working the brand hard with spin-offs such as branded music venues and a record label make sense, but this is a 25-year-old brand where like-for-like sales in the first half were actually lower than in 1995.

It would be churlish to judge Andrew Teare after just three months in the job. But the honeymoon period is certainly over, as the 6 per cent fall in his share price yesterday amply demonstrated. Leisure and going out are destined to remain very high growth areas of consumer spending but finding the formula that attracts the punters remains as hard as ever. Mr Teare might do better to return the Rank Xerox cash direct to shareholders than to embark on a reckless spending spree.

Reed pays £100m for legal publisher

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

and that the US was likely to be the key target. However, organic growth would provide momentum without more deals.

The results in the year to 30 June were roughly in line with expectations, with the scientific, professional and business operations all posting higher operating profits. All told, pretax profits rose 12 per cent to £416m, on revenues down 6 per cent to £1.7bn. The professional division, which groups Reed Legal and Lexis-Nexis, was particularly strong, with operating profits ahead 19 per cent and margins rising by 1 per cent point, 25.4 per cent.

The travel division turned in a disappointing half, largely due to the decline in the market for Reed's traditional paper-based information. The company said it was accelerating efforts to introduce new electronic data products.

The rump of the consumer division, much of which has

been sold off as part of a corporate restructuring announced last year, posted lower growth of about 8 per cent. Consumer books, which the company failed to sell at an acceptable price in an auction earlier this year, was "patchy" Mr Mellon conceded. "We intend to hold on to the company, turn it around, and sell it at a higher price when possible," he added.

The Tolley acquisition was a "perfect fit," Mark Arnott, chief financial officer, said. "Their products complement those we already have, and will give us a good position in the market for legal and regulatory information for business."

The company had profits of £4m last year, on revenues of £17m. Analysis said the price, about 25 times operating profits, was very high, but conceded Reed could benefit from running it alongside Butterworth, its existing tax and legal specialist publishing operation.

John Mellon: well placed to finance further deals



Now it's a black hole in cyberspace from AOL

PATRICK TOOHER

It was the hi-tech equivalent of the lights going out all over the world. It was the day AOL went AWOL.

America Online, the world's leading on-line computer service, was finally switched back on yesterday after the biggest black-out in cyberspace left more than 6 million customers world-wide without access to their e-mail and favourite Web sites for almost 19 hours.

The on-line service crashed while new host software essential to operating the system was being installed on Wednesday morning. Normal service was only resumed in the early hours of Thursday.

The shutdown left customers ranging from newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times* to small businesses and home-office workers staring at blank screens.

In Britain, subscribers missed hearing the seductive tones of actress Joanna Lumley greet

them with "Hello" when they logged on and "Goodbye" when they logged off.

Members will be credited for a lost day of service, Steve Case, AOL chairman and chief operating officer, said.

Jonathan Bulkeley, managing director of America Online in the UK, was contrite. "Since I've been at AOL, this is the worst disaster I've seen," he said in an emotional e-mail to subscribers.

"I remember a flood we had a few years ago where the operations people had to run out and buy aqua-hoovers to slurp up all the water in the computer room (six hours of downtime) and the transatlantic cables that were turned off for maintenance (seven hours downtime), but I can't remember a day like today."

He added: "I hope this will be the AOL disaster which becomes legendary - the day AOL went dark, the outage of '96, a distant memory."

Black-outs are becoming more common on the Internet and on-line services, reflecting the reliability problems that plague computer networks as they become more popular.

In recent months rival on-line services, including that of software giant Microsoft, have been disrupted by serious computer glitches.

The outage came at a sensitive time for AOL, hours before it reported fourth-quarter earnings. The company has already been hit by competition from the Internet, which has caused it to lower subscription fees. At the same time growth in subscriber numbers has slowed. Unhappy customers are the last things it needs.

With that in mind, a weary Mr Bulkeley signed off to his subscribers: "It's now 4:36 am on August 8th and I am going to sleep. Suffice it to say that we do not take this lightly. We do and will do everything possible to keep this from ever happening again."

Competition laws to get teeth

MICHAEL HARRISON

Companies found guilty of operating cartels or abusing their market power could be fined up to 10 per cent of turnover under a draft Bill to reform British competition law published yesterday by the Government.

The overhaul of existing laws would also give the Office of Fair Trading powers to raid company premises in search of incriminating evidence of cartels or anti-competitive agreements.

The European Commission's competition directorate has had such powers for a long time.

Until now British competition authorities had been pressing for similar rights but to no avail.

However, the draft Bill unveiled yesterday has yet to be laid before Parliament and some observers believe that is unlikely to happen before the next election.

The Tackling Cartels and the Abuse of Market Power draft Bill, the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, would only say he would lay it before Parliament "when the legislative programme permits."

The reform of the law would

replace the Restrictive Trade Practices Act, widely seen as too cumbersome and prescriptive, with a general prohibition of cartels, anti-competitive agreements and concerted practices.

It would also strengthen the powers of the Director General of Fair Trading, John Bridge, to tackle abuses of market power under the Fair Trading Act 1973 and the Competition Act 1980.

However, a DTI spokesman said that the proposed law would have no impact on the right of appeal under law that British Telecom is seeking against rulings that the Ofcom

recommence its investigation.

Under the changes there

would be a right of appeal to an independent tribunal and, in limited cases, to the High Court. Companies will also be able to apply for exemptions in the case of agreements which breach the new law but provide offsetting benefits.

IN BRIEF

• Nynex CableComms, the UK's second-largest cable operator, posted losses of £41.5m in the six months to 30 June, compared with a loss of £57.4m last time, on turnover doubled to £29m. John Killian, chief executive, said that revenues per line, as well as the overall subscriber base, had improved markedly and the company would be in positive operating cash flow "in the near future". He confirmed that Nynex was in talks with potential partners to launch a local television channel in Greater Manchester. The *Independent* reported yesterday that Granada, Nynex and the *Manchester Evening News* were in talks to set up a channel featuring non-match coverage of Manchester United football club.

• Complaints against regional electricity companies, compensation payments and disconnections fell sharply last year, according to the latest customer service report from the industry regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild. Complaints were down by 22 per cent to 7,584 while payments by RECs for failing to meet standards fell from 5,410 to 3,795. There was also a fall of almost 38 per cent in disconnections for bad debt with none in the London or Seaboard areas. Failure to meet standards rose from 364 to 601 at Swns, now owned by Welsh Water through the holding company Hyder.

• Glaxo Wellcome has won approval from the European Commission to market the anti-HIV treatment Epirvir in the 15 EU member states. Epirvir, licensed in other markets as 3TC, is indicated for use as part of a "drugs cocktail" for the treatment of both adults and teenage children. Glaxo said the new drug will be launched in each EU member state as soon as possible, following price negotiations with national health authorities.

• Northern Ireland will gain more than 110 new jobs due to expansion by two engineering companies in Belfast. Mackie International is to build a new factory at its Springfield foundry site while Thirte Scotts, a subsidiary of Denmark's Thirte-Titan, is expanding its existing plant. Baroness Denton, Northern Ireland economy minister, said investments totalling more than £240m promised at least 2,600 new jobs during the next six years.

• Unisys, the financial services group, bounced back to a £3.4m pre-tax profit for the six months to 30 June 1996 after a loss of £792,000 last time. John Schater, Unisys' chairman, said he expects to announce shortly a sale and leaseback of Unisys' historic City office at 39 Cornhill.

• Nokia, the Finnish electronics group, announced a 56 per cent drop in second-quarter profits to 725m markka (210m), compared with 1.67m markka over the same period last year. Although the mobile phones business showed a "slight operating profit" after a loss-making first quarter, the level was still "significantly lower" than the same period in 1995.

NatWest severs Spanish link with £123m sale

NIC CICUTI

National Westminster Bank yesterday brought to a formal close its independent presence in the Spanish retail banking market when it sold 80 per cent of Banco NatWest Espana to Banco Sabadell for £123m.

The UK bank still has an option to sell the rest of the business to Banco Sabadell between 1999 and 2001 at a minimum price of £31m.

Banking analysts said a sell-off of NatWest's remaining stake was likely to take place at the earliest possible date.

NatWest said its investment banking arm, NatWest Markets, would continue to strengthen its presence and activities in Spain, while its private bank, Coutts, would provide cross-border banking services to Spanish residents.

The sale price is 1.3 times above net asset value. After the reinstatement of £50m in good will previously written off by NatWest, the sale of the Spanish operation will show a loss of about £25m.

Banco Sabadell and its regional subsidiary in the Asturias region will merge Banco NatWest's operation with its own to create 600 branches throughout Spain.

The sale, first announced in June, marks another step in NatWest's strategy of concentrating on markets where it can develop a "major and profitable presence". In the past few years it has divested itself of retail operations in France, Australia, and the Netherlands.

British banks, including NatWest, have had difficulty in making significant profits on the retail side in Spain because margins are tight and competitive.

Over the past year, NatWest has moved to consolidate its strategy of concentrating on retail banking in Britain and Ireland, investment banking and private banking.

It has sold NatWest Bancorp, its US retail arm, for \$2.5bn (£1.75bn) and bought Gartmore, the fund manager, for £470m. It recently added Greenwich Capital, the UK's primary bond dealer, for \$590m.

In recent years, analysts have criticised the bank for a lack of strategy but they are now more comfortable with its direction, which includes a large restructuring of its UK branch network.

NatWest pleased markets last week when it bought back £450m of its own shares, leaving room for more repurchases throughout Spain.



Record Year for Heinz

I am pleased to report that H.J. Heinz Company achieved record earnings in Fiscal 1996. Global sales reached US\$9.1 billion for the year, more than US\$1 billion higher than the record set last year. Earnings per share progressed in kind, increasing 10% to US\$1.75 from US\$1.59. Operating income increased 11% from US\$1.16 billion to US\$1.29 billion. Heinz continues to be attractive to investors seeking consistent, double-digit earnings growth. Over the past two years, Heinz's stock price appreciated 52% during a period that saw a major secondary stock offering of nearly 21.8 million shares, a three-for-two stock split and two dividend increases. The total return over that period for Heinz shareholders who reinvested their dividends was 67%, or more than 29% compounded annually.

Looking ahead, Heinz has excellent growth opportunities in six core categories where we are driving for global leadership. These categories are: foodservice; infant foods; retail ketchup and condiments; petfood; tune; and weight control.

What distinguished these categories is that they are all very large; they are all growing globally; and, more importantly, they are all businesses in which Heinz enjoys leading brand positions and unique resources. We should also note that 26 of our brands will, this year, record sales of US\$100 million or more. Five additional brands are on the US\$100 million threshold. In summary, our growth plan is clear and achievable. We will continue to strengthen worldwide leadership and leverage in our six core categories. We will consolidate our acquisitions, relentlessly cut costs and attain higher standards in production efficiency. We will continue to grow overseas, with particular emphasis on emerging markets.

Sales	US\$9.11 billion
Net Income Before Tax	US\$1.02 billion
Net Income</	

THE INDEPENDENT

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Play INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

You've seen the rest now play the best in The Independent and the Independent on Sunday. Independent Fantasy Football, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs, brings you the first real innovation in fantasy football allowing you to pick the playing formation of your team. You can opt for a defensive strategy with five defenders, three midfielders and two strikers in a 5-3-2 formation, or go on the attack with three strikers in a 4-3-3 line-up. Complete your team with a goalkeeper and a Premiership manager and you'll be ready for kick-off. To put your title-winning team together you have a budget of £40 million to spend. It is up to you how you spend the money, with no restrictions on the number of players you can choose from any one Premiership team. Look carefully and you will find some real bargains, with Alan Shearer on sale for the fantacy price of £11.1 million!

So take up the challenge and prove your skill as a manager to win a football fan's dream prize and the opportunity to gloat over friends and colleagues well into the 1997-98 season.

PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

HOW TO ENTER

Using your football knowledge decide your team formation from the following four options:

FORMATION A. 4-4-2

4 Defenders, 4 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION B. 4-3-3

4 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 3 Strikers

FORMATION C. 5-3-2

5 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION D. 3-5-2

3 Defenders, 5 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

You are free to enter as many teams as you wish, allowing you to try out more than one tactical formation, but each team must be made as a separate entry via a separate telephone call.

Once you have chosen your formation, select your team of 10 players to fit your chosen option, plus one goalkeeper and



one manager from the list below. Players can only play in the positions that they are listed under and the team's total value must not exceed £40 million. Remember to give your team a name.

Use our Team Selection form above right, to make a note of your team's details, then dial our registration hotline to register. Where possible, please try to use a tone telephone, although a traditional pulse telephone can be used if necessary. Make sure you follow the instructions on the phoneline carefully. At the end of your call you will be given your own special PIN number, which you must keep safe. It can be added to your Team Selection form.

HOW TO SCORE

Every time one of your players scores a goal you will be awarded four points. Four points will also be awarded for goalkeepers and defenders whose team have kept a clean sheet during a match.

If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one-goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded one bonus point in addition to the stan-

dard four points awarded for that goal. Each successful assist (a pass that, in the opinion of our team of experts, leads directly to a goal) will give a player three points. The opinion of our experts on this matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

Players lose one point for a yellow card and three for a red card. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count for scoring purposes.

The Premiership manager that you choose will be awarded three points if their real-life team win, one point if they draw and no points if they lose.

Results will be published in The Independent every Wednesday for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent on Sunday.

Look out for transfer opportunities which will be announced during the season. Please read the Rules and Conditions carefully before making your call.

Team Selection Form

Name	Code	Value
Goalkeeper		
Defender 1		
Defender 2		
Defender 3		
Defender 4		
Defender 5		
Midfielder 1		
Midfielder 2		
Midfielder 3		
Midfielder 4		
Midfielder 5		
Striker 1		
Striker 2		
Striker 3		
Manager		
PIN No.		Total £

Team Name:

POINT SCORES:

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

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UK calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times. Republic of Ireland calls cost 59p per minute including VAT at all times. Maximum call length 6.5 minutes.

INDEPENDENT TEAM MARKET

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE
GOALKEEPERS															
300	Seaman	ARS	5.9	457	Watson	EVE	2.7	550	Pearce	WIM	2.2	685	Ginola	NEW	4.2
303	Bosnich	AV	4.0	458	Unsworth	EVE	3.0	553	Reeves	WIM	1.8	686	Clark	NEW	3.0
304	Flowers	BLA	5.2	460	Hoffiger	EVE	2.2	554	Thorn	WIM	1.8	687	Woran	NOT	3.4
305	Kharine	CHE	3.7	464	Jobson	LEE	2.7	555	Thatcher	WIM	2.7	688	Bart-Williams	NOT	3.6
306	Hitchcock	CHE	1.5	465	Wetherall	LEE	3.6					689	Stoe	NOT	5.0
307	Ogrizovic	COV	2.2	466	Dorigo	LEE	3.2	600	Mersoo	ARS	4.4	690	Gemmell	NOT	3.0
308	Filan	COV	1.5	467	Pemberton	LEE	1.2	603	Platt	ARS	4.8	693	Parker	LEI	2.5
309	Southall	EVE	3.0	468	Walsh	LEI	2.2	604	Parlour	ARS	2.4	694	Taylor	LEI	1.6
310	Martyn	LEE	3.3	469	Grayson	LEI	2.2	605	Helder	ARS	3.7	695	Izzett	LEI	2.1
311	James	LEE	1.5	473	Whitlow	LEI	1.2	606	Hillier	ARS	1.5	696	Waddle	SW	2.7
312	Pool	LEE	2.7	474	Watts	LEI	1.6	607	Taylor	AV	1.9	697	Blinker	SW	2.2
313	Hoult	DER	1.6	474	Babb	LIV	3.7	608	Rowdson	AV	3.1	698	Jones	SW	2.0
314	Schmeichel	BLA	5.5	475	Jones	LIV	2.7	609	Draper	AV	4.1	699	Hyde	SW	1.8
315	Walsh	MID	3.0	476	Wright	LIV	2.8	610	Dempsey	BLA	3.0	700	Magilton	SOT	2.4
316	Smicikla	NEW	3.7	477	Ruddock	LIV	3.0	611	McGillivray	BLA	3.7	701	Venison	NEW	7.4
317	Hirst	NOT	2.7	478	Scales	LIV	4.4	612	McGray	BLA	3.0	702	Heaney	NOT	5.2
318	Crossley	NOT	1.3	479	Harkness	LIV	2.2	613	McGillivray	BLA	3.8	703	McGillivray	NOT	4.8
319	Wright	NOT	1.3	480	Neville	MU	3.7	614	Rowdson	BLA	3.8	704	Campbell	NOT	3.1
320	Beasant	SOT	1.8	481	Neville	MU	3.7	615	Shewell	BLA	3.0	705	Hirst	SW	4.4
321	Pressman	SW	2.7	482	Irwin	MU	4.1	616	Emerson	BLA	3.0	706	Bright	SW	2.5
322	Coton	SOT	1.8	483	Pallister	MU	4.9	617	Griffith	BLA	4.4	707	Le Tissier	SOT	7.0
323	Walker	SOT	3.4	484	May	MU	3.0	618	Di Matteo	BLA	4.4	708	Williamson	SOT	3.7
324	Mikloski	WHI	3.0	485	Vickers	MID	2.2	619	Wise	BLA	3.7	709	Shipperley	WHI	4.0
325	Sullivan	WIM	1.8	486	Pearson	MID	2.2	620	Newton	BLA	2.4	710	Watson	SOT	2.2
326	Dixon	ARS	3.1	487	Whitton	MID	2.2	621	Parrock	BLA	2.1	711	Kelly	SUN	2.1
327	Winterburn	ARS	3.1	488	McGillivray	MID	2.2	622	McAllister	BLA	2.4	712	Stewart	SUN	2.3
328	Bouli	ARS	3.0	489	Benitez	MID	2.2	623	Simpson	BLA	3.0	713	Sheridan	NOT	7.4
329	Adams	ARS	5.3	490	Cooper	MID	2.2	624	Van Der Laan	BLA	2.2	714	Rossington	WHI	2.1
330	Keown	ARS	2.7	491	Chetton	MID	2.2	625	Elsharouki	BLA	1.9	715	Redknapp	WHI	4.0
331	Staunton	AV	5.2	492	Jerkin	MID	2.2	626	Kanichek	BLA	2.2	716	Redknapp	WHI	5.1
332	Southgate	AV	5.2	493	Lytle	MID	2.2	627	Parkinson	BLA	2.2	717	Dowie	WHI	3.3
333	McGinlay	AV	3.0	494	Parke	MID	2.2	628	Shaner	BLA	2.2	718	Holdsworth	WIM	4.5
334	Ehiogu	AV	3.0	495	Monkou	SOT									

sport

Brothers in arms raise the Pakistan standard

Cricket

DEREK HODGSON

reports from Headingley

Ijaz Ahmed and Salim Malik are married to two sisters in Lahore. Their third-wicket partnership of 130 in 38 overs, after Pakistan had been sent in, could be said to be a stand for family values.

Ijaz, the junior by five years, became the highest scorer for either team on this ground and

achieved a career-best. He pointed an England error: "I was looking for the ball outside the off stump. I like to play cut shots. The pitch was difficult for two hours, slow in the middle but bouncy wide of the stumps, good for me. I think 350 will be a good score, enough for our bowlers." Salim, once with Essex, reached his best score of the tour.

David Lloyd, England's coach, conceded: "It was Pakistan's day but we are not out

of it. They were apprehensive at the start and we lost patience at times while they were always positive."

On the controversial selection of only four bowlers he added: "We picked the side we thought best capable of bowling them out twice in the prevailing conditions. We now need to get them out as quickly as possible."

The first day may also be remembered in what is beginning to be an England management

and team in flux, for a whisper that John Emburey will shortly replace Peter Lever as the England bowling coach and for a banner that proclaims "Henry Blofeld is God."

The attendance, 9,000, was so poor that a local colleague claimed that the Yorkshire team would have drawn more. He was also quick to add when Dominic Cork and Chris Lewis were bowling like apprentices before lunch: "We could have had Goughie here to bowl this crap — and we would have had more to watch him."

Test match receipts are still approaching £250,000 and the attendance today and tomorrow will be near capacity but yesterday it was no Darren Gough, no crowd, no Western Terrace brawling — one reason suggested for the stay-away — but very much Pakistan.

Misbehaviour on the open side of the ground, including fighting, drunkenness and much bad language, made the terrace almost a no-go area for families and for many regular cricket watchers, but the Yorkshire club, by limiting the pedestrian area and by increasing the number of stewards, have certainly effected a clampdown but yesterday the atmosphere on what can be a noisy ground was limp.

The mother-in-law in Lahore might be happy to visit England in contrast to Ian Botham, who he said would not send to Pakistan.



Photograph: Peter Jay

Bowlers waste ideal conditions

HENRY BLOFELD

Because cricket is a slower moving game than most, one would have thought that it left the players with more time to make decisions. If so, why did the England seam bowlers start the second Test match by bowling badly and growing steadily worse until the lunch interval?

Mike Atherton won his first toss of the summer, which should have given England an important advantage in conditions that were excellent for seam bowlers. But what happened? They bowled too short to allow the ball the chance to swing on an overcast morning or to bring the batsman on to the front foot, where he is more vulnerable to late movement.

Not content with this, they also bowled too wide of the stumps, and the best bowler in the world would not be able to take wickets if the batsman is able to leave the ball alone.

All this makes one wonder how intelligence is passed on. Did the captain have a quiet word with his bowlers and try to set their minds straight? Or is he of the opinion that once bowlers have reached this level they should be able to work things out for themselves?

If this is so, it was counter-productive for England yesterday. It would have been surprising, to say the least, if the bowlers had been unable to work this out for themselves. But they persisted in the error of their ways for so long that one is forced to this conclusion. Surely it should be a cap-

tain's duty to remind his bowlers of the need for a tighter or different length and line if it is going to be to the greater advantage of his side.

And what about the coach in the dressing room? Should he sit on his hands and wait for the next interval or should he act at once? Obviously he cannot rush out on to the field, but there are time-honoured ways of getting a message to the bowlers or the captain: the 12th man can take out a sweater for a fielder and pass on a message at the same time, or even have a word with an erring bowler when he is finding on the boundary.

It is indefensible to have allowed the sort of bowling England produced at the start to continue for two such crucial hours in these conditions.

Surrey take command

MIKE CAREY

reports from Southport
Surrey 211 and 366-6
Lancashire 145

You would have to go a long way to find a team more comprehensively outplayed or so thoroughly fed up than Lancashire were here yesterday. When rain drew a veil over a mediocre bowling performance, Surrey were, incredibly, on this pitch, 432 runs ahead on a day when another 11 wickets fell.

Brendon Julian made 109 of them, his first Championship century occupying 109 balls with 13 fours and five sixes, with the last 50 or so savaged off even more disillusioned bowlers after Lancashire had thought he had been caught on the boundary for 66.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Britannic Assurance County Championship
Second day of four: 11.00 today
Lancashire v Surrey
SOUTHPORT: Surrey (5pts), with four end-innings standovers, are 432 runs ahead of Lancashire (4).
Lancashire won toss
SURREY — First innings (211) (P J Martin 4-59).
LANCASHIRE — First innings (145) (M P Bicknell 27, T W Hogg & Shahid Bajrang 32, I D Austin & Benjamin 3, S Shetty & Butcher & Benjamin 0, P J Martin not out 11, Extras (104, w/c, n/o) 15, Total (104, 40, 10) 211).
To bat: T R C Williams, M C Ball, R P Davis, J Lewis ("A" C Ash).
Bowling: Connor 11-3-22-3; Bissell 5-0-22-1; Statham 7-3-22-0; James 5-1-17-0; Keach 8-0-17-0; Usher 7-1-18-0; Keach 8-0-18-0.
Umpires: J C Balmer & P Wiley.
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE v MIDDLESEX
TRENT BRIDGES (Nottinghamshire 240) have scored 267 in their first innings against Middlesex (44).
Northamptonshire v Kent
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE — First innings (211) (P J Pollard & Gooch 100, B Fraser 17, A M Metcalfe & C Brown 17, A P Johnson & C Brown 17, R P Dohmen & R Palmer 17, A D Brown & C Tufnell 23, A J Hollingshead & C Tufnell 22, B M Harnett not out 19, J V Vass & C Tufnell 19, Extras (104, w/c, n/o) 20, Total (104, 30, 10) 211).
To bat: K Newell, R O Lane, T Moore, I D K Salterby, C V Drennan 17, S J Tait 17, R P Dohmen 7-0-43-4; DeFreitas 12-3-25-1; Dohmen 5-18-2.
Umpires: B Dutterson & R Palmer.
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Umpires: B Dutterson & R Palmer.
SURREY — Second innings (42) (M A Butcher & Richard B Chapple 46, D J Radcliffe & Steven Goffe 17, A M Metcalfe & C Brown 17, A D Brown & C Tufnell 23, A J Hollingshead & C Tufnell 22, B M Harnett not out 19, J V Vass & C Tufnell 19, Extras (104, w/c, n/o) 20, Total (104, 30, 10) 42).
To bat: M P Bicknell, R N Pearson, J E Bamji, J M Hogg & Shahid Bajrang 32, I D Austin & Benjamin 3, S Shetty & Butcher & Benjamin 0, P J Martin not out 11, Extras (104, w/c, n/o) 15, Total (104, 40, 10) 42).
Lancashire v Leicestershire
SWANSEA: Leicestershire (2pts) have won by 10 wickets. Lancashire (3) lost.
Lancashire won toss
SURREY — First innings (211) (P J Martin 4-59).
BIRMINGHAM: 3-1-27-0; Austin 6-44-0; Eworthy 15-1-71-1; Chapple 15-2-93-2; Gohar 15-3-56-3; Weston 10-2-39-0; Usher 10-2-39-0; Julian 8-0-42-1; Hollies 12-4-51-2.
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BIRMINGHAM: 3-1-27-0; Austin 6-44-0; Eworthy 15-1



Play INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

See page 20 for registration details

SECOND TEST: Pakistani's fluent century overcomes Atherton's long-overdue success with the toss

England deflated by Ijaz injection

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from Headingley

Pakistan 281-6 v England

A masterly fluent 141 by Ijaz Ahmed has given Pakistan the edge in this second Cornhill Test match. More importantly, it exercised the Headingley demons, allowing Pakistan to end the day on 281 for 6, a task made easier by England's bowlers, whose early waywardness cost the home side the advantage their captain had sought after winning the toss.

It was a brilliant innings by Ijaz, not only for its crisp attacking strokes, but for the confidence it clearly gave his team-mates, shocked by Saeed Anwar's early departure in the fourth over of the morning.

Such messages are important. Four years ago, the pitch's fieble reputation accounted for more of Pakistan's wickets than did the actual movement. Yesterday, Ijaz put that reputation, as well as those of England's seam bowlers, through the shredder, recording the highest individual score between the two countries at this venue.

Now 27, this was Ijaz's fifth hundred in 29 Tests, three of them coming in his last four Tests. His severity on anything slightly short was breathtaking and savage in its execution, although his soft hands, riding the bouncing ball in defence, were equally impressive. His century, scored off only 128 balls, was fast for any form of cricket and, but for England's profligacy with the ball, would have been one of the great Test innings.

It was clearly not in Atherton's script. However, there is an old adage in these parts – "When blue skies abound, it don't seem around" – and although there was early bounce, particularly for Andy Caddick, a day of mainly watery sustenance put paid to the extravagant sideways movement England had hoped for.

There are moments in any series when a captain needs things to go his way. Having lost every toss this summer, Michael Atherton at last won it; though not the one that preceded it for choice of ball, which again went Pakistan's way. Asking a side to bat first is a bold move in Test cricket, and is normally backed up by some equally gung-ho tactics on the field.

Defence, therefore, did not come easily to Atherton, whose bowlers, certainly until tea, looked as if they were bowling



Hooked on swing: Pakistan's Ijaz Ahmed hooks the England's Andy Caddick to the boundary during his innings of 141 at Headingley yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

with a soft orange and not a Reader ball. The combination of an attacking field and bowling far too short to sustain it, though Pakistan easy runs. The predatory Ijaz took 22 off two wayward overs by Chris Lewis, who looked far from match-fit.

This was clearly not how England had envisaged things going 24 hours earlier, when the pitch was still under cover. By putting them in and dispatching Ian Salisbury and Ronni Trueman, Atherton was beginning to believe his own ideology.

In truth, the pitch was neither as well grased or as damp as predicted, and the first three Pakistan wickets to fall were due to unforced errors by the batsmen, with Saeed the first to go as he thrashed a wide ball off

Alan Mullally to Atherton in the gully. It was a sharp chance and one the England captain enjoyed taking. But if it gave England ideas, that Pakistan were there for the toppling, they were soon dispelled, and it was not until the stroke of lunch that they struck again, when Caddick had Shabab Karim low, tentatively defending, and perhaps too aware of his predicament of having beaten through the first session.

The after-lunch prospect of Inzamam-ul-Haq, the hero of Lord's joining Ijaz – now on 58 – was one that any cricket follower would have salivated over, irrespective of creed or country. However, Inzamam looking strangely immobile, became Atherton's second victim (3-5).

Defence, therefore, did not come easily to Atherton, whose bowlers, certainly until tea, looked as if they were bowling

with the score at 103 for 3, England had fortuitously put themselves back into the game. Unfortunately, England's bowlers could not respond.

Headingley scoreboard

England won by 10 wickets	
Pakistan – First Innings	
Saeed Anwar c Atherton b Mullally	1
12 runs, 21 balls	1
Shabab Karim c Caddick b Mullally	2
122 runs, 90 balls, 5 fours	35
Ijaz Ahmed c Mullally b Caddick	3
145 runs, 122 balls, 12 fours	145
Inzamam-ul-Haq c Mullally b Caddick	4
120 runs, 112 balls	2
Progress: 100: 71 runs, 165 overs, lunch	
95-2 (Saeed Anwar 58) 205 overs, 100: 125	
100: 135 (Shabab Karim 120) 230 overs, 100: 155	
100: 170 (Ijaz Ahmed 28) 232 overs, 100: 185	
100: 185 (Inzamam-ul-Haq 145) 238 overs, 100: 200	
100: 210 (Ijaz Ahmed 145) 239 overs, 100: 210	
100: 215 (Ijaz Ahmed 145) 239 overs, 100: 215	
100: 220 (Ijaz Ahmed 145) 239 overs, 100: 220	
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